

Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru



12

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Volume Twelve

**A Project of the
Jawaharlal Nehru
Memorial Fund**



B. R. PUBLISHING CORPORATION

[Division of D. K. Publishers Distributors (P) Ltd.]

DELHI-110007

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Enquires about copyright to:
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund
Teen Murti House, New Delhi-110011

ISBN 81 - 7018 - 491 - 6 (Set)
ISBN 81 - 7018 - 497 - 5 (Vol. 12)

First published : 1979
Reprinted : 1988

Reprinted by: B.R. Publishing Corporation
(Division of D.K. Publishers Distributors (P) Ltd.)
at Regd. Office 29/9, Nangia Park, Shakti Nagar,
Delhi-110007.
Printed at : D.K. Fine Arts Press Delhi.

PRINTED IN INDIA

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FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

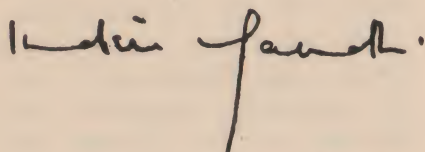
That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in

civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.



New Delhi
18 January 1972

Chairman
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

EDITORIAL NOTE

This volume covers the short period of about eight months, from 4 December 1941, when Jawaharlal, along with the individual satyagraha prisoners, was released from prison, till 8 August 1942, when the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay passed the 'Quit India' resolution, whereupon the Government of India arrested Mahatma Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee. During this period, the war in Europe was at its most bitter stage. The Nazis had attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, and the German advance was halted only at the gates of Moscow in December. Thereafter the two sides were locked in grim battle along the whole front. In December 1941, Japan also had come into the war, and, after her rapid occupation of Malaya, Singapore and Burma, landings on India's eastern seaboard seemed imminent.

In face of this extreme crisis, the British Government, to Jawaharlal's exasperation, continued to display a total lack of imagination. Churchill's announcement that the Atlantic Charter would not apply to India had already angered Indian opinion. Jawaharlal was clear-minded about the need to resist any Japanese invasion, and he toured the country urging his countrymen to be courageous and to build up their self-reliance. But he was not prepared to compromise with the British, and — in contrast to Rajagopalachari — urged that the only solution to the Indian problem was transfer of full power to a national government. He welcomed the visit in February 1942 of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and his wife although this led to no practical results. A month later, Sir Stafford Cripps brought proposals from the War Cabinet. The prolonged negotiations, conducted on the Congress side primarily by Jawaharlal, ended in failure. The repression that followed and the growing evidence of Britain's policy of racial discrimination while withdrawing from Malaya, Singapore and Burma confirmed Mahatma Gandhi in his view that Britain was incapable of defending India and should, therefore, withdraw. Jawaharlal had considerable reservations but ultimately drafted the resolution adopted by the Congress in August 1942, demanding British withdrawal so as to enable Indians to defend themselves and prevent India from sliding into passivity. For vindication of India's right to freedom, the resolution sanctioned the starting of a nonviolent mass struggle on the widest possible scale under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi.

Much of the material in this volume has been selected from the

papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. The cooperation extended by the Director and staff of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is acknowledged.

Some letters written to Kamala Nehru, Padmaja Naidu and V.K. Krishna Menon in the late twenties and thirties are included in the Appendix. We have so far been unable to trace few letters written to Madame Chiang during the period covered in this volume.

The National Archives of India have authorized us to utilize material in their custody. *The Hindustan Times*, *The Bombay Chronicle*, *The Hindu*, *The Tribune*, *National Herald*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *The Statesman* and *The Leader* have allowed us to reprint speeches, statements, articles and editorials first published by them. Acknowledgments are also due for permission to reprint to : (1) Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, London (eight extracts from *The Transfer of Power in India* 1942-47, Vols. I and II); (2) Public Record Office, London (one letter to Sir Stafford Cripps in the British Cabinet papers); (3) *The Spectator* (article in issue of 15 May 1942); and (4) Asia Publishing House, Bombay (two items from *A Bunch of Old Letters*).

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INDIA AND THE WAR I
December 1941—April 1942

1. Hold Fast to Our Anchor¹

To all my comrades, to Congressmen, to the people of the United Provinces, greetings.² It is good to meet old friends again, to see familiar faces, to feel the warmth of the welcoming smile and the embrace and grip of comradeship. It is good to see the wide fields and the crowded streets and ever-changing panorama of humanity. But it is not good to go in and out of prison at the bidding of alien authority. It is not good to come out of the narrow confines of a jail into the larger prison that is India today. The time will come surely when we break through and demolish all the prison walls that encompass our bodies and minds, and function freely as a free nation. But that time is not yet and we may not forget this or rejoice at a trivial change which has no meaning.

In this world of infinite suffering, where violence and hatred and the spirit of destruction seem to reign supreme, there is no rest or avoidance of travail. In this India, where foreign and authoritarian rule oppresses and strangles us, there is no peace for us and the call for action in the interest of a free India and a free world comes insistently to our ears. The call of India is there for those who wish to hear, the call of suffering humanity becomes more agonising from day to day. So there is no rest for us but to carry the burden of the day and hold fast to our anchor.

We have watched from afar the heroic courage and infinite sacrifice of other peoples struggling for their freedom, especially of the people of China, after four and a half years of terrible struggle; and of the people of Soviet Russia, pouring their hearts' blood and destroying their own mighty achievements so that freedom may live.³ Our conditions are different, our ways of struggle are not the same. Yet there is the same call for sacrifice and discipline and iron determination.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 5 December 1941. *National Herald*, 6 December 1941.

2. Jawaharlal was released from jail on 4 December 1941.

3. On 22 June 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union without prior declaration of war. The Russians suffered several defeats and lost much territory before they halted the Germans at the gates of Moscow in December 1941. The Dneproges Dam on the Dnieper River, in East Central Ukrainian S.S.R., built in 1928-32 with American aid, was blown up by the Russians on 27 August 1941 as they fell back before the Germans.

The call of India continues to resound in our ears and tingle the blood in our veins. So let us go forward then along the path of our choice and take all the trials and tribulations with serenity and confidence and with smiling countenance.

2. On War¹

I shall be sorry if Russia loses, though I do not entertain that fear; if I were asked with whom my sympathies lay in this war, I would unhesitatingly say with Russia, China, America and England. But, in spite of my sympathy for the group, there is no question of my giving help to Britain. How can I fight for a thing, freedom, which is denied to me? British policy in India appears to be to terrify the people, so that in anxiety we may seek British protection.

The release of political prisoners has not changed the situation; so far as Britain's policy towards India is concerned, it remains the same. While I cannot off-hand say what course the Congress will pursue, it has been demonstrably proved that the Congress stand is very correct. I admire the way Mahatma Gandhi has conducted the satyagraha movement² and affirm my confidence in the Mahatma's leadership.

You are aware of the latest developments in the Far East³ where a new curtain has been rung down and no one knows what will follow. The war might even spread to India.

You should think for yourselves and should not be carried away by slogans. I am against disruption amongst students, which is a sign of weakness. You should work together, for you will have to shoulder responsibility in the future.

1. Speech at Lucknow University, 8 December 1941. From *The Hindustan Times*, 10 December 1941.
2. The individual satyagraha or civil disobedience was started by Mahatma Gandhi on 17 October 1940 as a protest against the British denial of the right of freedom of speech to Indians to preach against the war and India's participation in it.
3. Japan attacked Pearl Harbour and declared war on the United States and Britain on 7 December 1941. Thailand, by an agreement with the Japanese on 8 December 1941, allowed Japanese troops passage through its territory. The Japanese also attacked Singapore and Malaya.

3. Freedom the Only Basis of Action¹

Every sensitive person must feel to a greater or less degree the agony of the world today. No individual or nation can or should think in terms of narrow self-interest in the face of this great catastrophe. We have to take the wider outlook ultimately even in terms of self-interest for there can be no doubt that national isolation is dead and the future is hardly likely to consist of a large number of separate national entities. Whatever attitude we take up in India we must keep the wider aspects in view. This war is something much bigger than a war, and out of its womb all manner of changes will arise.

I should like India to use its strength and resources in favour of possible good changes. In the grouping of powers struggling for mastery, on both sides there seem to be dreams entertained by governments of world domination. Undoubtedly this is so on the part of Hitler. It is not proclaimed as such by the other side. I have no doubt that any attempt at world domination by any group of powers will be harmful and must be resisted. Still I think that in the grouping that exists there is also no doubt that progressive forces of the world are aligned with the group represented by Russia, Britain, America and China. In addition to these progressive forces this group has also got strongly entrenched reactionary forces as evidenced by the treatment accorded to India. This treatment inevitably governs our own policy. Yet at the same time we must sympathise and wish well to the group which contains the progressive forces, more specially those of China and Soviet Russia.

In regard to India we have amongst us many differences of opinion, some of which are vital. Yet I think so far as Indians are concerned, to whatever group they might belong, one thing should be common and that is the freedom of India. It should be possible for all of us to accept this common basis for the present, and cooperate together to that end, keeping, if necessary, all our differences for future consideration and settlement. Possibly even this period of working together, in spite of our differences, will help in resolving those very differences. We are up against very big things in the world. None of us can forget this without becoming petty and little-minded. We have seen how some countries of Asia have in the course of this war lost their independence—

¹ Interview to the press, Lucknow, 9 December 1941. From *National Herald*, 10 December 1941.

Iraq,² Iran³ and now practically Thailand. We must, therefore, take this larger view and if we cannot make up our differences now, at least keep them for a future occasion, and meanwhile work together for the independence of India within the framework of larger world freedom.

Question : In the given conditions today, would you comment on Mahatma Gandhi's leadership?

Jawaharlal Nehru : Mahatma Gandhi's leadership has been brilliant; he has stood firm as a rock on certain fundamental principles and has not allowed himself to be diverted by various smaller happenings. It is very very easy for me or anyone else to criticise here or there certain minor developments with which we may not wholly agree but, looking at the scene as a whole, I think that Gandhi's leadership has not only been straight and sound but brilliant.

Q: What are your views in regard to nonviolence?

JN: I have been unable in the past to accept all the implications of the doctrine in so far as its practical application is concerned. But I have held that this is an ideal worth striving for, with all our might, and even this World War has demonstrated the utter folly of continued application of violence to the settlement of any problem. In fact, violence today can be effectively used only by three or four big powers; the others may be hangers-on. By themselves, they are completely incapable of thinking in terms of violence.

Q: How do you reconcile yourself to nonviolence in international affairs?

JN: I am convinced that the only way out for the world is complete disarmament or else more or less complete destruction. I can conceive, however, of general disarmament being accompanied by an international

2. After King Ghazi's death in 1939, his infant son, Feisal II, became king under the regency of his pro-British uncle, Abd-ul-Ilah. In April 1941, the ruling group of colonels under Rashid Ali went to war with the British but was defeated. Iraq was again on the side of the Allies under the regency of Nuri-al-Sa'id.
3. Iran proclaimed her neutrality in 1939 but in 1941 the British and Russians sought rights of transit through Iranian territory. Permission having been refused, the two powers invaded and occupied Iran on 25 August 1941 and divided Iran into two zones. The Russians occupied the north of the country and the British the south. Reza Shah abdicated in favour of his son Muhammad Reza.

air force which might be used for police purposes. But it is essential that this should not be under the control of a few great powers who can thus impose their will upon others. National freedom for each nation is essential before any such step can be taken.

Q: What is the position of the Congress vis-a-vis the war?

JN: The Congress position was first fully stated in the declaration of September 1939⁴ and subsequently added to by the All India Congress Committee resolutions. It remains till it is modified. Its application must necessarily depend on many factors. For instance, if it were made clear by the British Government that they accept that position completely, not just for the Congress, but for India, and give effect to it, this in itself would be a major international event, changing the whole character of the war. Inevitably the many drawbacks and obstacles towards giving support to the Allied cause would then be removed.

How India would give practical effect to its undoubted moral support to that cause then would be a matter for full consideration; it will have to be decided by the representatives of the people of India. The immediate object before India would necessarily be to defend itself.

Q: Will you advise Congressmen to cooperate with the Government in A.R.P. measures?⁵

JN: I am not fully in touch with the situation. Congressmen obviously will always give help in the protection of life, whenever such danger arises. Ordinarily, cooperation with the authorities means submission to the authorities. To my mind there are few people in this wide world who are so incompetent as the authorities in India in any matter. It is very difficult for intelligent people to submit to the decisions of unintelligent people.

Q: What do you think about the Indianisation of the Viceroy's Executive Council?⁶

⁴ See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 122-138.

⁵ Air Raid Precaution exercises were organised by civic administrations in cities and towns for the safety of life against air bombardment.

⁶ The Government of India stated on 22 July 1941, "As a result of the increased pressure of work in connection with the war, it has been decided to enlarge the Executive Council of the Governor-General in India in order to permit the separation of portfolios...." Accordingly, M.S. Aney and Sultan Ahmed were appointed to the Viceroy's Executive Council.

JN: I have never been able to understand the significance of Indianisation in anything, whether it is the Government or the army. One does not talk of the Anglicisation of the British army or the British Government. One talks about nationalisation of the country's government or army, one talks of power being transferred. The question, therefore, is not one of Indianisation but of transfer of power and the authority controlling that power. If the Executive Council of the Viceroy consisted of Indians of his choice, under the present circumstances it would make no difference to the seat of power; but if representatives who are responsible to others are chosen, that means an independent, responsible government and the Viceroy fades out.

Parliamentary activity means nothing unless there is a responsible parliament functioning. Mere going to the Central Assembly, delivering speeches or asking questions are not functioning in parliament at all, but whether it is desirable or not is another question. We must not delude ourselves by such vague phrases. But to me this kind of activity is entirely ineffective and unjustified and not in accordance with the general policy of the Congress at the present moment.

Q: What is the present policy of the Congress?

JN: The present policy of the Congress is not hundred per cent but largely one of noncooperation. But if you have followed the various movements conducted by the Congress during the last twenty years or so, you will have some picture of what that means. When we were not doing anything effective or taking any action we allowed the opposition to function, but it does not now fit in.

Q: What are your views about the Muslim League's demand for minority protection in the Constituent Assembly?⁷

JN: I cannot conceive of any valid opposition to that suggestion. I can conceive of an organisation or a minority saying that in certain matters which it considers important the will of the majority should not prevail against its own wishes. In such cases either there is agreement between the so-called majority and the so-called minority in the Constituent Assembly or there is disagreement. The question then arises how

7. Speaking in the Working Committee meeting of the Muslim League, on 24 February 1941, Jinnah stated that the Congress really demanded a Hindu raj and the Muslims would not accept a Constituent Assembly based on adult franchise or even an Interim National Government at the centre such as the Congress demanded.

to meet that disagreement. To say that an attempt should not be made by the representatives of the country even to find a basis for agreement seems entirely unjustified. As for the British Government they have succeeded in creating by their own misguided policy so many knots and tangles in India that they have themselves got tied up in all of them. It is not for me to suggest how they should untie themselves.

Q: Do you think that the minorities should be given separate electorates or joint electorates in the Constituent Assembly?

JN: Every minority which has a separate electorate at present and desires to have it should have it.

Q: How far has the country gained from the satyagraha movement?

JN: It is very difficult to weigh moral issues. The fundamental thing behind the satyagraha movement during these twenty-two years has been the strengthening of the Indian people. I think it has succeeded in an ample measure not only in so far as Congressmen are concerned, but even those who may not be within the Congress. In a sense India has gained tremendously by it. Further, it has put forward before the world a method of peaceful struggle which, though it may fall into errors owing to human frailty, is undoubtedly a great evolution in the world of thought as well as action. In the present instance, I feel that the satyagraha movement has enabled us to maintain the self-respect and dignity of India, to prevent the demoralisation which a passive submission to foreign authority brings in, and to impress the world not only with the Indian demand for freedom but also with the value of the peaceful technique of struggle while inhuman war goes on in a great part of the world.

4. India's Unchanged Attitude to War¹

After over thirteen months spent in the solitude and isolation of prison it is not easy to adjust oneself to the activities of the changing world. Individual opinions may be expressed, but they will lack the reality which

1. Statement to *Daily Herald*, Lucknow, 9 December 1941. Printed in *National Herald*, 12 December 1941. The *Daily Herald* published only extracts in its issue of 15 December 1941. Here we are giving the *National Herald* version.

contact with people and a living situation gives them. I am seeking to regain these contacts and the Congress Working Committee will no doubt give expression to its views very soon.

My first impression is of the hardening in the situation in India. The repeated declarations on behalf of the British Government in regard to India and the policy that has been pursued have antagonised almost every section of Indian opinion and made people here believe that nothing can be expected from this Government. The attempts to play off different groups against each other and to promote every disruptionist activity, the support of reactionary elements, the reversion to conditions of fifty years ago and the openly offensive and authoritarian attitude of the permanent officials of the Indian Civil Service have made conditions far worse than they have ever been within my knowledge. Bitterness has been added by the ill-treatment of political prisoners² and by the detention in concentration camps of large numbers without charge or trial.³

This is the national background, and the release from prison of a number of Congressmen does not make any essential difference. Even now there are thousands in prisons and concentration camps. But even if all these were released the real problem will remain, made much harder of amicable solution by the events of the past two years. There was a time, soon after the war began, when a possibility arose of solving the problem.⁴ But that tide in the affairs of men was allowed to pass and everything was said and done to anger and humiliate the proud nationalism of India, which is by far the strongest force which moves our people. That nationalism is not the aggressive nationalism of Europe but the peaceful nationalism of a people demanding their own independence within a larger world order of free nations.

At the same time, the people of India had long sympathised and expressed their solidarity with the progressive forces in the world, in China, Europe, America and elsewhere. That sympathy continued and they viewed with anxiety the prospect of these forces being crushed by the

2. Complaints were received that prisoners who were allowed charkhas were not allowed slivers although spinning was a recognized jail industry. The 'C' class food continued to be bad. Lathi charges took place frequently inside the jails. Although political detenus at the start received allowances of Rs. 10 and Rs. 5, almost all of them were deprived of such allowances shortly afterwards. They were divided into 2 classes; the 'A' class detenus received rations worth Re. 0-4-3 each, while those in the 'C' class were given Re. 0-1-4 each. When representations failed to lead to any improvement there were often hunger strikes.
3. About 300 political prisoners in Delhi, Ajmer and Deoli jails were detained under the Defence of India Act and their cases were never investigated. They were even denied the treatment given to political prisoners.
4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 122-138.

fascist nations. On the British side, they saw a combination of imperialist and democratic forces, with the former completely controlling Indian policy. In spite of their evident sympathy with the anti-fascist forces and nations, they could not submit to conditions which meant national humiliation and an acceptance of their subject condition. Indeed, their very anti-fascist outlook made them rebel against the fascist and authoritarian nature of the Government of India. The spread of the war to the Soviet Union widened and intensified their sympathy for the progressive forces, but did not affect their reaction to the British Government's policy in India, for that was based on other causes. No self-respecting people or nation could tolerate a surrender on this issue, whatever the consequences.

Many of us were distressed that at this supreme moment in the world's history India was not playing a more active and effective part. We shared the agony of the world. Yet we felt that even so we were playing a not unworthy part by drawing attention to certain essential aspects of freedom without which a military victory would be valueless and would lead to even greater tragedies. It was essential to recognise that the entire world must be based on freedom and the cooperation of free peoples in a world order, that the economic order must be changed to prevent exploitation and to promote the fullest use of the world's resources for human betterment, that there must be full disarmament of all nations and an end of armed warfare between them. Hitler's victory would be a greater disaster, but it would also be a disaster if others who were victors established a hegemony over the world, supported armed might, which would develop into another type of fascist authoritarianism. The only alternatives were freedom and disarmament all round, and continuing warfare and destruction.

Mahatma Gandhi is a full believer in nonviolence. Most of us are not pacifists, but this war itself has convinced us of the futility of armed states trying to destroy each other as well as civilisation periodically by war. The system which gives rise to this must go. This war will run its appointed course, but it must be made clear that this system must be ended. Personally I agree with Mr. H.G. Wells' proposal that there should be an international air force and no national armies.⁵ But this must be really international, and not controlled by a few great powers. We want no great power, greater in armed might, but free nations.

5. H.G. Wells, in an article reprinted in *The Bombay Chronicle* of 13 July 1941, stated that "this war has revolutionised all our ideas of war on land, at sea, in the air. . . the objective of all rational men throughout the world, so far as I can work it out, should be . . . that we bring out of this war a world federal control of the air that shall make another *blitzkrieg* impossible for ever more."

The entry of Japan into the war has now made it world-wide, and it approaches India's borders. That is of vast interest to us, but it will not make us panicky. Our sympathies must inevitably be with the non-fascist nations. And such help as we can give them, consistently with our own principles, would flow to them, if we functioned as a free people. Only freedom can tone down the enormous antagonism that British policy in India has created.

Whether it is India or the world or the war, no petty hesitant half-measures are of any avail. This was so in September 1939, when the Congress issued its declaration on the war, by which it has stood throughout. This is much more so now, and the history of the past two years bears witness to it. People who think in terms of preserving the old order, or presuming to tell us in India that they are the best judges of what we should have, are not going to solve anything. They are dangerous relics of a past, which must be swept away if the ground is to be cleared for real victory and freedom. And of that the greatest test is India now, in the present, and not after the war.

5. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
11 December 1941

Your cable.² I have sent a message to *Daily Herald*,³ sending another long message to *News Chronicle*⁴ via Bombay. Reynolds requests message, but no press authority. Only the Working Committee is entitled to give an authoritative exposition of policy. Prisoners' release makes no difference to Indo-British relations, but desire express solidarity with

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. He requested Jawaharlal for a message to *Daily Herald* and forwarded good wishes from J.G. Winant.

3. See preceding item.

4. See succeeding item.

peoples of China and Soviet Union in their magnificent struggle for freedom. Please convey my greetings and good wishes to Winant,⁵ Maisky,⁶ Wellington Koo.⁷

Jawaharlal Nehru

5. John Gilbert Winant (1889-1947); Chairman of United States Social Security Board, 1935-37; Director, International Labour Organisation, 1937-41; United States ambassador to Great Britain, 1941-46.
6. Ivan Mikhailovich Maisky (1884-1975); Soviet diplomatist; ambassador to Great Britain, 1932-43; Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1943-46; author of *Before the Storm* (1944), *Who Helped Hitler*, *Reminiscences* (1962), *Memoirs of a Soviet Ambassador* (1964), *Bernard Shaw and the Others*, *Reminiscences* (1967).
7. (b. 1888); Chinese diplomatist; served both the Peking Government, 1922-28, and the Kuomintang Government after 1928; delegate to Paris Peace Conference, 1919-21; Foreign Minister, 1922-24, 1926-27, 1931; ambassador to France, 1936-41, to Great Britain, 1941-46 and to United States, 1946-56; Judge of International Court of Justice, 1957-67.

6. The Meaningless Release of Prisoners¹

I am grateful for the friendly message of the *News Chronicle*,² and I appreciate the warm sympathy for India's cause on the part of many friends in England. In these difficult days when passions are aroused obscuring the mind and when the relations between the Indian people and the British Government are strained to the utmost, the companionship of even some minds in different countries is of importance and helps to prevent narrowmindedness. But it must be remembered that this is of little avail if the whole background is one of hostility. Nothing is more obvious in India today than the deep and widespread hostility

1. Statement to *News Chronicle* (London), Allahabad, 11 December 1941. Printed in *National Herald*, 21 December 1941. Cabled to *News Chronicle* from Bombay on 16 December 1941, but only extracts were published in its issue of 17 December 1941. Here we are giving the *National Herald* version.

2. In its editorial of 4 December 1941, the *News Chronicle* welcomed the release of Jawaharlal and other civil disobedience prisoners. It stated that their imprisonment at the "time when we should have been doing our best to smooth the path of cooperation was an act of stupidity." It hoped that "this belated admission of error would be followed by a change of heart in the British Government over the Indian question on the whole."

among all sections of the people to the system that the British Government has represented here. That hostility was an inevitable consequence of past and present history but the policy and utterances of the British Government during the last two years of war have intensified it. For the people generally that is the governing factor and wider considerations, which may move individuals, become secondary.

It is true that we in India have great differences amongst us, but have also a great deal in common which is basically more important and wise statesmanship should have emphasised and encouraged those common bonds. Instead of this the British Government has become the greatest disruptive factor in India in addition to being completely authoritarian, alien and oppressive. The only possible response to that is noncooperation with that Government, for nationalism is by far the strongest urge of the Indian people. Even if individuals for wider reasons desire a variation of that policy, they cannot overcome the people's deep-rooted hostility and distrust of the British Government and the governmental structure in India which can only lessen by a complete change of scene and a pleasant psychological shock accompanied by the conviction that the old order has completely gone, never to come back again. Not even the most far-reaching promises of what will happen when the war ends will bring this conviction for there is no belief left in words. It is the present that counts. The Atlantic Charter³ if applied to India would have made no difference but the deliberate non-application of it to India was significant and made it clear as the midday sun what British policy stands for.

Only the independence of India has any real meaning for us, though we believe that the day of a large number of separate national entities is past and there must be world cooperation among free nations based on certain fundamental principles. For my part, I would welcome these principles as outlined in H.G. Wells' declaration of the Rights of Man⁴ with certain additions. Indians will never accept any position in an Empire by whatever name it is called. India is a great nation and a mother country which has influenced in the past vast sections of the

3. The Atlantic Charter, issued in August 1941 by Franklin Roosevelt and Churchill as a statement of their war policy, declared among other things that "we respect the right of our people to choose the form of Government under which they will live; and we wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them." But Churchill hastened to announce on 9 September 1941 in the House of Commons that the Atlantic Charter had no application to India though, in his opinion, it was in full accord with British policy in India, as embodied in the August Offer.

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 116-117.

human race in Asia; she is not a colony or offshoot of another nation growing to nationhood. She wants to live in peace and friendship with all nations in the world, but she is inevitably drawn to her neighbours with whom she has had thousands of years of cultural contact, more especially to China and Burma in the East and Iran and other countries of Western Asia.

Therefore, the first essential is the recognition of Indian independence and the consignment to the dustbin of the infamous August declaration¹ and all other similar declarations of the British Government. Then only can we get over the dismal and crushing heritage of our past relations and join hands in friendship.

I realise that in the vast elemental conflicts that are raging national issues must not absorb our attention and we must view the picture as a whole. Out of this war all manner of things arise, whether we like them or not, and all we can do is to try our utmost to further the things we want to have. It is not enough to say that the war has to be won; we must win the objectives of the war, and for this purpose the objectives must be clearly stated and acted upon in the present in so far as possible. That has been the Congress position throughout and it remains so today. Some of us as individuals may wish to go further in aligning ourselves with the larger causes, but our efforts will remain ineffective unless the whole background changes in India and popular hostility is removed by vital changes. Even these individuals must oppose all co-operation with a government which treats their people and country with arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from fascist authoritarianism. It must be realised that mere release from prison of some people means nothing at all. By itself it is a challenge which has to be accepted.

This war has convinced me of the utter folly and criminality of armed conflict and the method of violence in international affairs. I am no pacifist, but I believe that complete disarmament of all nations must be one of the declared objectives of the war. I realise that the war must go on, whether we like it or not, and it is not possible for anyone to take

1. On 8 August 1940, the Viceroy, in reply to the Poona Offer of the Congress asking for transitional National Government during the war, stated that "a moment when the Commonwealth is engaged in a struggle for existence is not one in which fundamental constitutional issues can be decisively resolved." He accepted that the Indians should share the responsibility during the war and proposed expansion of the Governor General's Executive Council and setting up of a War Advisory Council. With regard to the position of minorities in any constitutional revision, he reiterated that the British would not accept "any system of Government where authority is directly denied to large and powerful elements in India's national life."

up a negative attitude to it. Given the background I have indicated above, it follows that all possible support has to be given. Without that background and those steps, effective help is not possible. More particularly, I should like to express our solidarity with the peoples of China and the Soviet Union who represent many ideals that we value and who have given a magnificent demonstration of their invincible courage and spirit of sacrifice. For my part, I should like help to flow to them.

Recent developments in the war situation are of intense interest to India and the political and psychological background is ever changing. Realisation of this cannot, however, reach the masses unless the basic fact of the Indo-British relationship is converted into recognition of Indian independence and cooperation between free nations.

7. To Abdul Latif¹

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

My dear Latif,

Thank you for your letter² of good wishes. It is comforting and encouraging to have the affection of friends like you. We are living through very difficult times and the whole world is in an uproar. There is no question of coalition ministry³ or of any ministry as far as I can see.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter dated 8 December 1941, Latif, referring to Jawaharlal's statement of 5 December 1941 (see *ante*, item 1), said that "each and every sentence of your statement breathes a great affection and love for the country which is only to be felt and not exposed."

3. Latif feared that in an event of a coalition ministry between the Congress and the Muslim League, it would lead to "the slaughter of Congress." The reference was to Muslim League, Forward Bloc and the Nationalist Congress joining a coalition ministry headed by Fazlul Huq in Bengal.

8. To Sampurnanand¹

Allahabad
14-12-41

My dear Sampurnanand,

Thank you for your letter.² I quite understand and appreciate your views. The points you have urged have been in my mind throughout this past year and more and I can say that I am not in disagreement with anything you have said taken by itself. But my emphasis would be different and this makes a difference to the general approach. There are some governing factors which seem to me to be highly important. The first is our reaction to the British attitude to India. This attitude makes it almost impossible for us to do anything but offer resolute opposition. That opposition must be based on a disciplined Congress and on Gandhiji's support and leadership. Otherwise we become ineffective and weak and lost in a crowd of voices speaking different languages. More particularly our approach or reaction to the British and British policy must be simple, straight, thorough and united as far as is possible.

Then again I am worried at the intrusion into our discussions of the debate on nonviolence. Most of us have certain definite opinions on this subject and they are likely to change easily at this stage. Yet we have found unity in action more or less. I do not want to make this issue the major one in the Indian mind, thus relegating the other issues to the background. It may be that we may have to decide this issue in relation to defence in the future. But to introduce it now is to create confusion and major splits in the Congress in public mind.

With a great deal that Rajagopalachari says in his convocation address³ I agree and yet I entirely disagree with his whole approach to the

1. Sampurnanand Papers, National Archives of India.

2. In his letter of 14 December 1941, he suggested that freedom, not freedom of speech, should be the declared goal of the satyagraha movement, and more scope should be allowed to individual initiative. He desired that the leaders should make people rise above mere anti-British feeling.

3. In his convocation address at Lucknow University on 13 December 1941, he pointed out that Mahatma Gandhi stood for opposition to all war because of the application of nonviolence. "But some of us feel that our struggle cannot simultaneously bear the weight of two such major issues, the issue of British control over India and the demand for its total removal, and the issue of non-participation in war, total and irrespective of equity or politics of alliance to secure just ends... India should cooperate, therefore, with the British in the war to facilitate the transfer of power... Nonviolence does not end with deliverance from foreign political control but lies in fighting against violence in every department of social and national activity after attaining self-government."

question. Behind it lies not a theoretical problem but a definite and dangerous policy of lining up with British policy almost as it is. Even from the narrowest viewpoint of national self-interest this seems to me to be a dangerous policy.

You will remember that for the first eight months of the war the British Labour Party refused to join the British Government because they would not cooperate with Chamberlain and Co.⁴ This in spite of a lack of major difference and in spite of the immediate danger of war & invasion. It was only after Chamberlain went that they joined. Our case is infinitely stronger and I am convinced that we cannot associate ourselves with the British so long as they control Indian policy.

I think that the situation will develop rapidly and all we can do at present is to keep wideawake and to hold together, avoid discussions in public which confuse and weaken, and present an unshakable front to the British, while at the same time keeping in line with international events in so far as we can.

This is brief and not very clear. But it must suffice for the moment.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. The Labour Party did not join Neville Chamberlain's War Cabinet, formed after the declaration of war against Germany on 3 September 1939, and waited till Churchill took over as prime minister in May 1940.

9. The Priority of Independence¹

After a long time I am here again addressing you at this Purushottam Das Park. I have said "after a long time" for indeed a period of about fourteen months has elapsed. But time is, nowadays, a bad measure of the progress of the world, for what really counts is not the temporal gap but the progress which has been made and the eventful happenings that have taken place. If many big events come to pass within a short space

1. Speech at Purushottam Das Park, Allahabad, 14 December 1941. From *National Herald*, 17 December 1941 and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

of time the period should be regarded as a long one. On the other hand if nothing eventful happens during a long period of time it is negligible. What is happening in the world today and what we see around us, is changing the world so swiftly that our minds can hardly keep pace with the changes and grasp them. So I am justified in saying that a long time has elapsed. During these fourteen months many important events have taken place in India in connection with our freedom struggle and the war. I am not sure whether you have fully grasped their implications for they are rather intricate. We are simply watching the events without explaining to the people what is going on in the world. People no doubt read the news in papers and hear them on the radio, discuss them among themselves but can see nothing with their eyes. It is one thing to look at the chessmen and watch their game, but quite a different thing to understand and appreciate the play.

The war has reached the borders of India. Whether it is near or far off, it must have, and it is in fact having, its repercussions on India. I do not wish that the war should spread to India and that her cities be bombed. I would be grieved if enemy planes drop bombs on Indian cities. But from one point of view, I would like it because it will rouse up this old country from its obvious slumber and make it think of the world events. Anyway, it is not in our hands and is a thing of the future.

Our country is facing grave issues and it is the duty of each one of us to consult our comrades, co-workers and institutions and unitedly to follow a course of action which is justified for India. If we lack teamwork, there will be sectional party factions which is reprehensible. The first lesson we have to learn and translate into action is, that we must work unitedly and firmly. Even if we mark time there should be absolute harmony and resoluteness in our ranks.

We can of course retrace a false step but if we lose the power of marching, all is lost. It is, therefore, necessary for us today to ponder over these problems from all points of view and to arrive at a definite decision collectively, even though some individuals might not entirely agree with the final decision of the majority. For this very reason I should have kept mum and spoken only after due consultations, but I have been a sinner in this respect. Only seven or eight days back I was released from jail and during this interval you have seen my several speeches in the press. Notwithstanding my earnest desire to hold my tongue, I find that it becomes very difficult for me to restrain myself when I meet my friends and the public. It is impossible to reply to their questions by silence and something has to be said. I have, therefore, said something although I have still refrained from saying a lot and have kept back the thousands of ideas which are crowding my mind.

Before addressing you I had the occasion of meeting and holding consultations with many leaders at Lucknow and I was much benefited by it. Jail life affords ample opportunities for cool thinking. There we get an opportunity to think over many things and this we cannot do when we are out of jail. But in a way we are cut off from the world and however much we might read newspapers and think deeply over a problem, we can never keep abreast with the times when we are out of touch with the public. Therefore, it is advisable for a man who has just been released from jail, after a long spell, to acquaint himself with the march of events and to study his environment with a view to finding out what is happening and what can be done. I have been trying to do this for the last seven or eight days since I came out of jail, and I shall continue the effort. After a few days I shall go to Bombay and then to Bardoli where the Working Committee is going to meet. Important decisions will be taken there.

I want to remind you of a few things which form the main theme of discussions in and out of jail and among Congress leaders and public alike. It appears that different men hold different views and this is by no means surprising. India is faced with a number of problems today but the primary issue before her is that of her freedom. If anybody loses sight of it, he is a worthless man. It is with this larger issue of national freedom that the problems of India's poverty, unemployment and illiteracy are linked up.

It is a settled fact that in the present-day world we cannot separate the problems of one particular country from the rest of the world. If we think that we are concerned only with the freedom of India and have nothing to do with the world, we are labouring under a delusion. What happens in one country today, must have its inevitable effect on other countries. While the thought of India's independence should be uppermost in the mind of every Indian, you cannot remain safe in your country if the world is engulfed in a conflagration. You cannot ignore the world and think only of India's safety. Neither should you be swayed by communal sentiments whether you are Hindu or Muslim. If you are a Hindu and think only of Hindu interests or if Muslims think in terms of their interests only, then such sectional interests are reprehensible. A number of our countrymen entertain such views and they regard the interests of one community as higher than those of others but they are in the wrong. There should be absolute equality of rights and privileges. This means that the whole world is closely bound together.

The war has now spread to almost every part of the world. It is raging in all the three continents — Europe, Asia, and Africa. If peace is

restored after this war and a treaty is signed, it will relate to all the countries of the world and not to any particular part of the globe. But it is India's independence that we have particularly to keep in view. After all if we Indians do not get independence, we are worthless. We Indians want our freedom, which concerns forty crores of people. This is a serious problem before the world. It is possible that these forty crores of Indians might be drowned but the world has reached such a stage today that if these forty crores of Indians are drowned they will go down with a big portion of the world including the British and their country. Such is the relationship of the world and India today. China is even bigger than India and she has an ancient civilisation. You may rest assured that when a decision affecting the whole world is taken, India and China whose population is forty to fifty crores—about half the total population of the world—cannot be ignored. Therefore, if any person talks of the world without taking notice of India and China, under the delusion that India can be ignored for she is a small country, he understands neither India nor China. So the question of India's independence is a vital issue not only for India but for the whole world. This is the primary issue. All other problems are secondary.

The next question which arises is how to win this freedom. This is not a separate question by itself but is linked up with the first one. I shall explain this to you. It relates to the war and has become much complicated. When the war broke out a little over two years ago the Congress issued a long statement. What was the British reply to it? They attacked our nationalism and the Congress. Satyagraha was, therefore, started and Congressmen courted arrest. Recently I and some other people have been released by the Government but the satyagraha movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi has not yet been suspended and is still continuing.² Of course we have been set free and we shall hold consultations and put forward what is finally decided, but the movement will continue unless the Congress decides another course of action. Now the intricate question which arises is that on the one hand we cannot help in the prosecution of the war; we do not want to render any help, nor are we cooperating in the war effort; at the same time we do not want to press those who are voluntarily cooperating in the war effort to desist from rendering help. But the way in which the British Government has been flouting our demands for the last two years and the statements issued by high-placed British officials with regard to India

² Mahatma Gandhi, in his statement on 7 December 1941, asserted that he would not suspend his anti-war activities, meaning the satyagraha, until the warring powers accepted the nonviolent way.

and the Congress, are still fresh in our minds. What conclusions have you drawn from them? I have drawn several conclusions. The first is that the British Government which rules over us has not changed its attitude towards us in the least.

If the war has brought about any change in the attitude of the British Government it is the increase in its arrogance and misbehaviour towards Indians. Remember, I always refer to the system of government and bear no grudge against any individual. I harbour no ill will against the British public but I shall ever remain hostile to a government like the present British Government which always tries to practise oppression on India and keeps her enslaved. It will always continue its efforts to hold Indians under perpetual domination no matter how many revolutions might take place in the world. It is annoying to read Mr. Amery's statement.³ I have reiterated here more than once my ideas in that connection. Whatever be the final results the only possible attitude towards such a government today or at any time can be one of rebellion. Mr. Amery's repeated utterances⁴ in regard to India are calculated to create the maximum of dissension among Indians by various means. The way in which he talks of India and humiliates Indians is well known to the present-day world. No one can cast aspersions on India and speak against her freedom. We cannot bend our knees and beg for Swaraj. I do not do this and I hope no Indian is so devoid of self-respect as to do so.

The second point is that the war is a big affair and it is not confined to the British people and their Government. It is an international affair and many nations are ranged in opposite camps. The British Government is fighting against Hitler who is in Germany. We have no

3. Amery, in a written reply to a question in the House of Commons on 12 December 1941, said that the release of prisoners in India was unconditional and there was no change involved in the declared policy of the Government regarding the future constitutional advance. He had no doubt that the Governor General would take such steps as might be necessary to intensify India's war effort in the face of "grave developments in the Far East."

4. Amery told the House of Commons on 22 April 1941 that Gandhi's civil disobedience had "proceeded languidly," was "irrational" and that Britain would consider the issue of free India if there were any agreement between the various political parties in India. Further, on 2 August 1941 he doubted if there was any India like Belgium or Holland, "India is much more like Europe than it is like an individual country". On 19 November 1941 he talked about British contribution to India and welcomed Churchill's statement of non-applicability of the Atlantic Charter to India. He repeated the need for goodwill amongst the Indian communities and the necessity for building up war effort on 27 November 1941.

sympathy with him. Nazism is but another form of an oppressive imperialism. I regard these nations as tyrannical which are striving to bring the world under their subjection. You know Germans are a martial race and they are well-versed in the art of warfare. We must admit that they have not betrayed weakness on any battle ground but their weakness consists in their lack of forethought. Do they not know the huge toll of lives that would be exacted by the war? I have deeply thought over these matters and have also read a lot about them. Do you know what opinion Germans hold about Indians? They think themselves to be at the highest rung of the international ladder while the lowest position is allotted to Indians by them. So it is impossible for us to sympathise with them. Indians might be full of emotions of anger against the Government and they might very likely be led to think that their enemy's enemies are their friends, but this is muddled thinking and if we think like this we can do nothing great in our great country. We have to think which country is inimical to us. We are not filled with cowardly fear of the strong and we cannot help our enemy's enemies with a view to seeing our enemy defeated. That would be wrong for us. We have to think over all these points and carve out our destinies. Our friends in this war are the Chinese with whom we are closely related and who have our full sympathies. I think that China will play an important part in the future world. I hope and wish that India and China take a big step unitedly in the reconstruction of the future world. I am glad that the bonds of our relations with the new China are strengthening. China is also involved in the war at this end and we wish her to triumph.

You must have heard about Russia and might have heard adverse reports about its internal affairs. We know that in India, Russia is discussed in and out of Congress circles. I have disliked many things in Russia and have frankly expressed my views about them. Twenty-four or twenty-five years ago a new order was introduced in Russia. They had to face great hardships and to resort to violence but they placed the proletariat on a high pedestal. They committed thousands of mistakes, still they presented a new picture before the world and established the rule of the masses.

So these are the two things you have to bear in mind. The path shown to Indians by the satyagraha movement gave them much encouragement and made them capable and strong. But we cannot introduce in India the Soviet system of government. You might be able to introduce minor changes on the Russian model but you cannot copy Russia. Like India Russia was also illiterate but you can hardly find any

illiterate there today. They have improved the condition of the peasantry enormously. They have developed their industries and hundreds of factories are working there. So you see that they made great strides in advancing their civilization and have presented a new picture before the world. This gave tremendous strength to the masses.

The same problems are cropping up in India also. We generally take too long to do a thing in this country but in Russia big things are done with a lightning speed. It was for this reason that the latent powers of the public were unfolded. When the potential mental energy of forty crores of our countrymen will find a channel, it will flow like a big river and our nation can achieve big results by united efforts. Some of us try to acquire strength but we do not know how to utilize it properly. We have not yet acquired the requisite strength but I assure you it is already there in your hearts in a potential state; only it is struggling for an outlet and we do not know how to unfold the channels. What has taken place in Russia is not the achievement of a single individual. Lakhs of people in Russia have laboured hard to achieve big results. We might disapprove of certain things in Russia, still we Indians have heart-felt sympathies with the Russians in their distress. About six months ago Germany made an unprovoked attack on Russia. A huge offensive was launched during the night without notice. This was an innovation. Formerly an ultimatum preceded an attack but now the practice is to attack a country first and declare hostilities later. Many countries were invaded in the present war but the invasion of Russia was the most surprising one. A fierce attack was launched in which fifty lakhs of troops participated simultaneously over a long front of thousands of miles, and German armies marched ahead. In the annals of world history we do not read of such a big battle being waged anywhere as was waged by Germany against Russia. I do not want that the new order which Russia has evolved should crumble to pieces.

It is this which makes the matter complicated. On the one hand the attitude of the British Government fills us with indignation and our only reaction to such an attitude can be one of opposition and rebellion against their system of government, but on the other hand we are anxious to avoid anything that might inflict any harm on our friends, China and Russia. There are also certain parties in England which sponsor the cause of India's freedom and there are certain countries in the world which are anxious to see India free such as America and others. So the question arises in the hearts of Indians as to what policy should be adopted.

It was in view of this that Mahatmaji launched the satyagraha agitation. It was individual satyagraha but twenty-five or thirty thousand

persons courted arrest in the movement. I am happy and proud to say that our province contributed more than half of the total number of satyagrahis. But we must not take into account their number. Had it been a question of numbers alone, we could have sent lakhs of people from our own province. As you know, Mahatma Gandhi imposed several restrictions and refused permission to many people to offer satyagraha because conditions and pledges had to be fulfilled for it. He used to tear off lists and to strike out the names of prospective satyagrahis who did not fulfil the conditions because he did not wish to embarrass those nations with whom we had sympathy. At the same time he wanted to show to the world the sort of treatment that was meted out to Indians. The people of India constitutionally are opposed to cooperation in this war. Of course, if we are granted independence, we can think of doing something. A slave cannot think of anything. He is quite inert. I think Mahatma Gandhi acted on these considerations. He had to keep up the balance between the two sides. This is my personal view of his actions. It is quite inappropriate for me to say anything about Mahatmaji. However if we ignore the unimportant things and keep the important ones before us, I can say that the principles he laid down, and the manner in which he conducted the movement for two years, will remain immortal in the hearts of Indians. There should not be any misunderstanding about his motives. A good cause should not be sabotaged. Hence his technique was quite complicated. He did it, so that non-Congressmen may not accuse him of inactivity. But we shall keep up the balance of both the scales.

These are the different viewpoints which I have presented to you and every person can have his own opinion. But the fundamental policies which have been pursued in India under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi have done good to India and the world. Our strength has increased by it. But the British Government thinks that it has not benefited us in any way. It may be so. My reading of the British rule in India is that it is devoid of reason and commonsense. As far as their contact with the Indian masses is concerned, they never pay any attention to them. They imagine that they have brought the Indian masses under their thumb, though this is entirely wrong.

We have to prepare ourselves against any eventuality. You should forget that we have to help the British Government in this war, but we should know how to react if India is attacked. We have to prepare ourselves to answer this question. I do not know how to give a clear-cut reply at this stage but I can certainly do so after studying the situation. Had we been independent we would have taken every step to safeguard India. But power is not in our hands. Then why are we

asked to help the British Government? Does it mean that we should obey their orders blindly however worthless these may be? A civic guard has been formed in Allahabad and much rot is talked. Can the British Government save India by these methods? If they proceed in this manner in their own country, they too would lose their country. It is impossible for us to follow them like courtiers. If we are to follow like that, why should we follow worthless persons?

What should we do under such circumstances? This is a knotty problem. I want you to be clear in your minds about this point. You know that the battle for freedom in our country has been going on for the last twenty or twenty-two years under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi on the principle of nonviolence. The Congress accepted this as its principle for our freedom struggle. Mahatmaji adheres to it as his creed. It is right for him to do so but for a political institution like the Congress it is difficult to stick to it under all circumstances. Congress accepted the principle but did not think or decide that, in the event of an attack on India, it would not keep an army to defend her, or it would not use police and armies to check dacoities. Mahatmaji wishes that India should have a government without police and armies. This is to be considered.

Today the papers have published a statement of Rajagopalachari regarding this matter and I wish to make certain observations in this connection. A perusal of Rajaji's statement or any other thing should not lead us to think that the issue of nonviolence is no more before the Congress or the country. This is a misunderstanding and we need not be misled by this. We shall not keep armies or put up armed resistance to defend India but we shall take other steps. Thus a question of principle crops up and this makes a vital difference between ourselves and the British. But the British have only to gain by this because they will propagate to the world that we are divided on this issue of nonviolence. They will say that we are not concerned with our defence and that they are carrying on the administration in the way they like. I warn you against this, as these questions are sure to arise and they are being actually raised before you, before me, and before the whole world. But at the present moment this is not the primary question before the Congress and the country. The Congress would give a suitable reply when this question actually arises. As I have already told you, the Congress would not keep any army to defend India. Sometimes, however, it is bad to attempt to do all the good things at one time as its consequences may be bad. The principle of nonviolence appears to be quite good, for no gentleman or lady would like violence. Then there is also the problem of Hindu-Muslim differences which is a sign of backwardness.

Whenever differences exist in a country it can be called a backward nation.

Can we not call the belligerent nations now at war to be backward in view of the destruction and havoc they are doing to themselves without any substantial result? If this war continues like this, the world is sure to perish. Many countries in Europe have perished. Cities have been rendered lifeless. Corpses are lying uncared for.

Allahabad is quiet these days. If somebody loots and stabs somebody in your *mohalla*, you are frightened and you are shocked. You read about it in papers which makes you sad. Similar feelings are created when you read that two lakhs of men have been killed in Russia. Hence this war has become inhuman. There was a time when soldiers used to fight and weaker men and women used to live indoors. But today the combatants and non-combatants both are on the field. If the war continues in this way, the world is doomed. I want that hostilities should cease but this cannot come about at the bidding of myself, Mahatma Gandhi or the Congressmen. If all of us sit idle, no result would come out. We have to think how fearful war is. If this war does not come to an end, there shall be wholesale destruction. I do not like violence on principle, and its use even in domestic issues.

Today there are only a few powers in the world like America, Germany, Russia, Japan and England. Other nations have no real existence. Our neighbouring countries like Iran and Iraq are under British possession and Thailand is under Japan. If we have to keep armies, they should be fully equipped like those of Germany and Russia, otherwise they would be of no use to us. Remember that India is a big country, it has the necessary strength and capacity to become a big and strong power if it gets an opportunity like China. It is not the number of forty crores that counts but the bravery of the people. The Indian armies fighting these days on various fronts are not really Indian for they consist of mercenary soldiers. No doubt the Indian troops have won admiration wherever they have fought and even German generals have praised them. They are not only brave but efficient fighters. They know the technique of the present war. Our comrades would have been equally brave fighters, and, given an opportunity, they would have won the whole world for us. Indians have the necessary stamina and brains, the latter being of vital importance in the present war. We are not weak but we should like the war to end. Our country suffers and so do the others. We will reach success towards our goal of freedom, after this war. There cannot be any peace so long as war and atrocities continue in the world. In case other countries keep armies and do anything they like, we too cannot afford to go without them. We shall exert our full strength. Our country shall

strain its every nerve. But you should remember the decision of the A.I. C.C. held at Bombay.⁵ It was clearly stated there as to how far we could follow the principle of nonviolence. Today we have to see and study what is going on in the world. I have given you an idea as to how far I am in favour of nonviolence. I have also told you that although I am in favour of nonviolence yet there are many difficulties that have to be faced. Nevertheless it is clear from the statement of Rajagopalachari that people should not forget the goal, whether they talk of violence or nonviolence. The same question of men and administrative difficulties comes before us in another form in connection with the war. We do not know how to dispose of the question of violence and nonviolence. If it comes before us in the long run, what shall we do? We should not sidetrack our goal of freedom before this question.

I do not know what meaning you have attached to the recent release of Congressmen, but I am sure you know that they have not been released because of any love for them in the hearts of the British. They have been released because of pressure from several sides. The greatest pressure was exerted by the very presence of prisoners in the jails. The pictures of accredited leaders of India in jails were before the Indian masses. It was a blot on the British Government. It was not liked by some people of America as well.⁶ At the outbreak of war with Japan, an amnesty was ordered. British policy, however, remains unchanged. Mere release of certain prisoners does not mean any change of policy in regard to the freedom movement. Our old policy of resistance and opposition to the British Government shall continue. I do not know how it will be possible. This is to be thought over. We have many things to take into consideration.

What shall we do if India is attacked? For the time being there is no danger to India but of course Burma is in the danger zone. Calcutta

5. The A.I.C.C. resolution of 16 September 1940 rejected a policy which was a denial of India's right to freedom, which suppressed the free expression of public opinion and which would lead to the degradation of her people and their continued enslavement. It requested Mahatma Gandhi to guide the Congress in the action that should be taken. While insisting that the Congress must have the fullest freedom to pursue its policy of nonviolence, it stated that the Congress had no desire to extend nonviolent resistance, should this become necessary, beyond what was required for the preservation of the liberties of the people.
6. For example, seven faculty members of the University of Chicago on 12 June 1941, in a memorandum 'India and the present war', urged the American authorities to mediate in solving the Indian problem, including the release of "prominent political figures". They stated that to a large section of Americans the question of India "is a touchstone with which they test the assertion, that this war is for the defence of democracy and democratic principles".

can be bombed. It would be improper for me to indicate a solution of these problems because it is not a question of our individual opinions or principles. Times are hard. We are perplexed to see the situation of the world. This is not an opportunity for us to mock at any country. We are under the British Government. We may oppose the Government but the English people are beset with trouble. Their men, women and children have lost their lives in thousands. Their cities have been destroyed. The English masses do not wish to rule over India but to save themselves. Similarly we have sympathy with the German masses also. We have heartfelt sympathies with the Russians and the Chinese. We sympathise with their principles also. Hence we should not mock at others. If we realise our condition we are sure to find ourselves fit to be a laughing-stock for others. We have to hang our heads. The primary question for us is to increase our strength and organisation in the whole country. I do not know of any organisation other than the Congress whose network is spread out throughout the country. British rule may continue here or go. Even if it wishes to remain here it cannot. Go it must, it is only a question of time. The question which everyone asks is when is the poverty of this country going to be removed and how can we save ourselves from the different kinds of losses which are inflicted on us?

It is a policy of the present rulers to frighten us by bringing the war nearer to India, so that they may continue here and we might go over to them. But we shall not yield to it at any cost. We have to think and present a united front even if it might be a false step. But if we are overtaken by fright or lethargy, we shall not be able to do anything, when more revolutionary days arrive. Remember that Mahatma Gandhi has emphasised this fact only. He has said that the war is a prolonged one and he will continue with his satyagraha.

So far I have spoken to you of India's struggle. This will continue even after the European war. If we have strength enough we shall achieve the goal. These revolutionary catchwords will not take us far. It is a fight of endurance. Today countries are faced with hard tests. You can take the longest strides. China has been fighting for about four years. Thirty to forty lakhs of people have perished and the country has been ruined. Only a small number of persons courted arrest in this country. The cable which was received from Chungking is known to the world.⁷ A large part of Chungking has been destroyed by Japanese bombs. It was stated in the cable that Chungking is not what it was previously, but still the Chinese will remain firm and will not be fright-

⁷ See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 345.

ened. If we have strength enough we shall reach our goal, otherwise if our lungs are defective and we are asthmatic, we cannot reach our goal. These empty slogans will not lead us to freedom.

People go to jail by offering satyagraha. Many persons were arrested under D.I.R. and interned at different places like Deoli. They did not offer any satyagraha nor were they convicted or tried for any offence. Many have been released prematurely like Purnima. Purnima Banerji and Lal Bahadur Shastri have been released today. People courted arrest in hundreds and have suffered considerably in jails. You cannot know it. When we offer satyagraha and go to jails, it does not mean that the public which does not offer satyagraha should take rest, for this will make you idle. If you are not selected as a satyagrahi, the responsibility for keeping the Congress flag high is yours. You have to continue the routine meetings and other activities.

Then this grand welcome to Congressmen who go to and come out of jail is a farce. Those who are ready to sacrifice everything for the sake of their country demand your help and sympathy. Everybody should do his duty here. Do not think it to be merely a duty with selfish motives as it weakens you and the other nations go ahead in the meantime.

I offer my thanks for the welcome you have accorded me today. I appreciate it because I got an opportunity to see familiar faces of Allahabad. It is true that I should attend meetings to see you and renew my old bond of love. Whether I see you or not, I hope that we reside in the hearts of each other. I do not wish that we should rest content with this thought alone but we should accomplish the task which is on our shoulders. The world is changing today, and this is no time to sit idle. We should do more work in these revolutionary times. We should not think that this is to be done by a particular person. It is the work of every Indian, man or woman. One should do as much as one can. If one cannot move a hundred steps, he should at least walk fifty steps. If one cannot do so or if any person gives up his efforts, he proves his worthlessness and is a dead weight for world freedom.

10. To Hajrah Begum¹

Allahabad
December 15, 1941

My dear Hajrah,²

I was happy to receive your letter.³ You must excuse me for this rather brief and typed reply. The world grows odder and more tragic day by day. That is perhaps all the more reason why we attach greater value to our personal contacts with friends. Your thinking of me and writing to me therefore brought me pleasure.

What will happen is more than I can say. All of us can at best try to see the light and follow it, though often enough this is a business of groping in semi-darkness. Nothing could have been more magnificent than the Soviet's splendid defence. Yet I believe that the old order in the Soviet will undergo considerable modification just as the old order in other countries must inevitably change. I do not think that the basic economic policy of the Soviet will change but I do think that the political approach and orientation will be greatly influenced, as it is being influenced, by Britain and America. That influence will of course be mutual. The old Communist tactic is hardly likely to survive this war.

You are perfectly right in not considering me as a kind of secondary Lenin. Of course I am not.

I hope Zain⁴ is doing well. When you write to him send him my love.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (b. 1910); social worker and wife of Z.A. Ahmad, C.P.I. leader.

3. Hajrah Begum, in her letter dated 9 December 1941, sent her best wishes on Jawaharlal's release from prison and stated that she had "developed a tremendous sense of humility because of the terrific shock given to Russia. Even Russia, which to us seemed invincible is fighting with her back to the wall." This strength of Russians was because of men like Lenin and Stalin and very soon India might also have a Lenin. But not Jawaharlal, "because I do not see you as the leader of the workers. I feel for India it will have to be someone from the real masses who will lead our proletariat."

4. Z.A. Ahmad.

11. Simla and Vichy¹

You must be reading in the newspapers about the deaths of thousands of people every day in the present war. If it had happened only on one day then there would have been a feeling of grief at such a huge loss. But when it becomes a matter of daily event nobody ever thinks about it or feels about it. In Spain, Manchuria, China and Czechoslovakia greater tragedies have taken place but none cares to visualise whither the world is going.

As I was an eye-witness in Barcelona,² Hungary and Prague, my sensibility to European events was sharpened. The picture of Europe that floated before my vision was a Europe stricken with panic and fear and many other weaknesses.

My hope about India became brighter when I compared European conditions with those obtaining in India. I found, to my relief, that we were free from some weaknesses which characterised the Europeans.

The present war can be divided into three well-defined periods—the period before Russia entered the war; the period after Russia's participation; and the period after Japan's attack in the Far East.

Many persons have asserted that due to the entry of the Soviet Union the war has changed its imperialistic character. Slogans and catchwords like the imperialistic war are impediments to real thinking. Let us not use them indiscriminately. There is no doubt that Britain is fighting for its freedom and its Empire. But even when faced with a life and death struggle its imperialistic ways have not changed. Russia's entry into the war has not changed the character of the British Government which is an enemy of Indian freedom.

The phase of war beginning with the attack on Russia has changed the complexion of the war no doubt, but not the outlook and attitude of the British ruling class. It does not see the revolutionary changes going on behind the war. The ruling class in England and France is played out, but the people in Russia have stood the test with courage and strength. The fact that the Soviet stood the German blitz, which called forth the admiration of all, was due to the structure of its state and economic system. In spite of war conditions, England has not been able to

1. Address to students, Allahabad, 15 December 1941. From *The Leader*, 16 December 1941; the *National Herald*, 17 December 1941; and *The Hindustan Times*, 17 December 1941.

2. Jawaharlal witnessed air bombing in Barcelona (Spain) in 1938.

mobilize her war efforts like Russia. So far as the Government of India is concerned, its structure is not only out of date, but what is more surprising, it is living in the nineteenth century.

The Government of India invites comparison with the Vichy Government.³ It is also afraid of Indians. Vichy prostrated, lying low, always talks of maintaining the French Empire; and Simla, Delhi and London also talk of preserving the British Empire. The mental make-up of Britain's leaders is fascist. There is not much difference between fascism and imperialism.

One of the most remarkable features of the present war is the brave resistance put up by the Reds. The epic defence of the Soviet Union arouses our admiration. The destruction by Russians of the Dneproges dam, which was a product of twenty years labour, is symbolic of the spirit that animates the U.S.S.R. To serve a larger cause they destroyed one of their greatest achievements. In spite of reverses, the morale of the Soviet state is high.

I cannot understand the mentality of those who plead that India should have Dominion Status after the war; it might be two years or five years. The term Dominion Status applies only to those people who regard England as their mother country. Though India has been under British rule for the last 150 years or more she is not an offshoot or outgrowth of England. On the other hand, India is a mother country. Indian culture, Indian philosophy, Indian art have spread in Asia and elsewhere. There has been cultural contact between India and China and India and Greece. That cultural tie has not been broken. It is idle to talk of Dominion Status and the so-called British Commonwealth of Nations. Who knows what would be the state of affairs after the war? There might be a federal union between England and America. England might become a state of America. This idea of Dominion Status is implanted in the minds of those who believe in the permanence of British rule. It is a sheer waste of time to talk of the grant of Dominion Status two years after the war. Those who engage themselves in such discussions are doing a disservice to their country. What we want at the present moment is independence and nothing else. Who knows what will be the fate of Britain or the British Empire two years after the war. It matters little whether Mr. Churchill talks of Atlantic Charter or Indian Ocean charter.

3. As a part of the peace settlement, Germany occupied the northern half of France. The French National Assembly met in unoccupied France and constituted a government under Marshal Petain with its capital at Vichy.

Besides, in a fast changing world with the fate of things altering with each turn of events, the talk even of a time-limit has no meaning. What we want is independence. That means severance of connection with Britain. Of course, that does not mean a position of isolation for us. What it does mean is that we should form a part of the new order in our own right. On this question of independence of India there can be no compromise either with the British Government or with any group in India.

At this moment there is a need for discipline among students. You should not fritter away your energies over small things such as elections. The time has come when you should all stand united because the map of the world is changing every day. If you keep your eyes shut and only continue shouting slogans you cannot reach your goal.

12. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
16-12-41

Your cable.² I am just going to Bombay thence Bardoli. Your information about developments here misleading. Extreme bitterness here against British policy in India and attitude obscurantist and reactionary of officials. While fully realising its implications recent international events consider recognition of independence with real transfer of power as essential prerequisites for effective step. Undesirable your interviewing British officials.

Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In his cable of 15 December 1941, Krishna Menon asked Jawaharlal to take positive initiative in national leadership and government at the time of imminent peril. He desired that Congress should participate in war effort without insisting on legal, constitutional changes. He wanted that India should discharge her historical role alongside Russia and China, and therefore mobilize people and resources against fascism despite government's obscurantism.

13. India Can Only Be a Rebel¹

Question: What are your views on Mr. Amery's speech delivered in London yesterday?²

Jawaharlal Nehru: For the past few months that I had been in jail, I have been watching the British Government's policy and the activities of their officials in India and my conviction has been confirmed a thousand-fold that in these circumstances India can only be a rebel against the British Government which have had the insolence and audacity to speak so often through their officials in patronizing terms about moral, spiritual and political values when they themselves have demonstrated to the world that they possess none of these—not even ordinary efficiency either in war or peace.

I am not interested in the repeated performances of Mr. Amery on the public stage repeating the same thing *ad nauseam*. My only answer to him and to the British Government is, in the words of Oliver Cromwell, quoted by Mr. Amery himself in the House of Commons, "We have had enough of you. Get out".³

Some people talk of the revival of the Poona Offer⁴ or some other thing that is dead and over. I am not a believer in revivalism either in religion or politics. Naturally a politician must take into consideration the changing circumstances in a changing world. But for anyone to think in terms of eighteen months ago after all that has happened, is to exhibit a singular rigidity of mind, and that is fatal during this period of war and revolution.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 17 December 1941. From *The Hindustan Times*, 18 December 1941.
2. Speaking to the Indian officers in the fighting forces at the Overseas League, Amery spoke of the responsibility of the Indian forces in fighting for the common cause of human freedom, justice and decency. He asserted that "political freedom can only be achieved by unity and maintained by strength. Freedom is a thing which is not conferred as a kind of titular distinction, but is acquired by moral unity which sustains it within and by the power to defend it against dangers from without."
3. Mr. Amery is reported to have said, in the debate in May 1940 in the House of Commons which led to the resignation of Chamberlain, "Depart, I say, and be done with you."
4. In November 1941, S. Satyamurti, then Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in the Central Assembly, pleaded for parliamentary activity by the Congress, and the revival of the Poona Offer.

During the last few days that I have been out of prison, I have tried to avoid dealing with specific issues, for authoritative pronouncements on these can come only from the Congress Working Committee, the Congress President or Mahatma Gandhi.

I have dealt with the general question of principles of our policy. Recently, the question of violence and nonviolence has cropped up like King Charles's head. This is a matter which has been frequently discussed in India for years past and everyone knows Mahatma Gandhi's views on it, as well as the general reaction of the Congress. The Congress view on this question was framed concisely at the last meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Bombay when a resolution was passed with which Mahatma Gandhi agreed in so far as it went for Congress purposes. No doubt he personally goes further but as the leader of the Congress he accepted it and adapted himself to it. For my part I accept it completely. But I would like to say that during the past year of war and world-wide disaster I have been drawn even nearer to the ideal of political nonviolence and complete disarmament. I cannot say that this can be applied in toto regardless of circumstances for always, as the All India Congress Committee has said, external factors and internal conditions will have to be considered. But I do think that we should try our utmost in that direction. For me, and I think for the Congress, this issue in the form in which it has now been raised does not arise, though events may bring it into greater prominence at any time. Other issues precede it. They must be considered first or else there will be confusion of thought and issues.

When people talk about any kind of cooperation between India and the British Government⁵ they seem to forget two factors. First, the enormous bitterness of the people today is greater than ever against the British Government's policy in India. Anyone who takes the trouble to find out what the people's feeling is has only to speak to the man in the street from Peshawar to Cape Comorin.

During my past twenty-five years of political experience, I have never known feelings so strained and bitter. No politician, whatever his individual view might be, can ignore this background. Secondly, I would like to give an instance, which, though far from being a parallel, is interesting. The British Labour Party, in spite of being completely in line with the war in England, refused to cooperate with the Government there till

5. The Viceroy, speaking at the annual general meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce on 15 December 1941, made an appeal to the people of India to forget their domestic differences and work together for the common object "at this critical moment in the history of mankind".

the Chamberlain Government was pushed out. They were faced with the immediate danger of an invasion, yet they maintained their attitude and Mr. Chamberlain had to go. It is apparent to anyone how our case is infinitely stronger from every point of view and it is absurd for anyone to imagine that we can cooperate with this Government.

It is true, looking at the international situation, that all manner of considerations arise which induce us to give our sympathy to the group of powers fighting against Germany. If I have been in favour of giving help to China all these years, I cannot change my attitude now.

If I am in favour, as I am, of assistance being given to Soviet Russia, I cannot change my mind on that subject because of Soviet Russia's association with Great Britain. Undoubtedly all these create difficulties. There is no problem in this world free from difficulties. But I cannot, under any circumstances, function as a camp-follower and recruiting sergeant of the British Government, and thus support their policy in India and their general policy towards their subject countries.

Some people and some organisations talk about what might happen after the war is over or a year or two later. I am totally unable to understand this attitude. I am concerned only with today and here and now. It will not be Mr. Amery or the British Government who will shape things in the future, but the vast elemental forces that are already rising in the world.

The British Government have not only to face their hundred and fifty years' past in India, and such a past is always in our memory, but even in their recent past they have sown seeds of trouble which will bear their evil fruit. Only by an entirely different policy based on the ending of their Empire and imperialist policy can they avoid the effects of this policy and win mass sympathy of the Eastern people.

Q: Why do you not advocate mass civil disobedience if you are so convinced of the popular feeling against the British Government?

JN: Mass civil disobedience was and is undesirable from the general point of view. I am in general agreement with the policy adopted by Mahatma Gandhi.

Q: Do you feel that individual civil disobedience has succeeded in disorganising the Government's efforts in India?

JN: Here it must be remembered that it was never the intention to hinder the British Government's efforts in India and thus help fascist and

Nazi forces. On the contrary if the question relates to whether the movement has affected people's minds in and outside India then the answer is in the affirmative. It has been most successful in that it has recorded the unwillingness of the people of India to submit to the policy adopted by the British Government.

14. The Right to Rebel¹

It is ten days since my release from jail. They say that within a month they will slowly release all the prisoners. To me the purpose of jail delivery appears to be this, that the British Government feel that they should give up the wrong path which they have been treading and in future take the right path. Then this release will have some meaning. But their attitude is revealed by the speeches, whether they be of the Viceroy or Mr. Amery. After two or four very big sentences, there is some digression and then repetition. In fact, the British Government have done nothing new. Then why have they released us? Mahatmaji has already given a reply to this.² But perhaps the British Government have put this question knowingly. They thought that the people who would be out of jails would debate and fight amongst themselves and the Congress would not be able to offer any fierce resistance. Mahatmaji has said, through this jail delivery Government has, in a way, given us a challenge. We have got to set aside minor disputes and do big things.

Now what reply have we to give to this? We cannot give a reply to this, but the Congress Working Committee, which is going to meet within four or five days, will give one. Whatever had to be said, Mahatma Gandhi has already said. Now nobody else has any right except

1. Speech at Palanji Sojpal Building, Bombay, 18 December 1941. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.
2. Mahatma Gandhi, in a statement on 4 December 1941, said that the decision to release prisoners "cannot evoke a single responsive or appreciative chord in me.... If the Government of India is confident of the full support of India to war efforts the logical conclusion will be to keep civil disobedience prisoners in custody because they produce a jarring note. The only meaning I can attach to the release therefore is that the Government of India expects the prisoners to have changed their opinion regarding their self-invited solitude. I am hoping that the Government of India will soon be disillusioned".

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. But even so you and I can discuss it at the Congress Working Committee meeting because Congress is a democratic organisation. Therefore, all should understand what is to be the reply of this. I often see that many people without taking the trouble of understanding what the question is, try to give a reply. This is absurd. We have to see what is the question before the world and to search for a reply ourselves. But then what are these talks about principles and what is that which the world and India need? This is to be kept in view at this time.

The war is raging before our eyes and has almost spread to the whole world and has approached our borders. The eminent British officers tell us: 'War has approached India. War has come upon the threshold of India. Now India has got to be prepared for offering resistance.' Mr. Amery can say so. It is true that war has come near India. War is not a good thing. If war reaches your city of Bombay you will not like it. Whether you like it or dislike it the enemy will not come after consulting you. They will come when they have to come. This is true. The British constantly remind us of this. Everything that is said is calculated to create panic in the public. The officers want to create a fear in the public so that it comes under their control. They believe that by consistently giving threats, they may demand any services in the manner they desire from us, without sharing any responsibility. You understand the work of making people nervous. The British Government want us to bow our heads before them. The British have got aeroplanes, they have got modern armaments. In modern warfare we cannot fight any battle without aeroplanes. We are not equipped to fight the modern war. So people get nervous and go to them. For this reason, they say, this is the time of danger. You help us and we shall protect you. This becomes a challenge to us. This is true. We do not deny it. Our country may be attacked by the enemy. They are in Burma, and it is possible that some parts of Bengal may be approached by the aeroplanes. But whether they come or not, we should get ready, for if we get nervous we cannot do anything, nor can we save ourselves.

Whatever may happen in the world we must face it. At present lakhs of men are fighting, but we are mere spectators. This war has been going on for the last four and a half years, perhaps this is the fifth year. Today our Chinese brethren are fighting against the Japanese. Lakhs of Chinese have died but they have not become nervous. On the contrary, they have resisted the enemy with the utmost bravery. This also increases our courage.

I do not think that any army will come to India. If it comes then we will do what we consider proper. Had our country been free we

would have decided what we would do. But our hands are tied up. We cannot do anything else except helping the British Government. But we shall do it when we become free or when the Government changes its policy.

Aneyji and Sultan Ahmed have become members of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Perhaps you may be knowing them. Aney's name has remained in my memory. I can say that these people are such simple-minded people that they cannot oppose the Viceroy or the Governor General. They are all for pleasing the Government, but before the Congress these are all small things.

You know what is happening in the war. In modern warfare it is not that soldiers fight while others remain in the shops and carry on their business. Now the war is that of bombs. It is a war in which your women and children are involved even if they do not desire to fight. How bravely the Germans have fought! Their women, children, all of them fight. The whole country is a country of soldiers.

Russia has resisted the German armies with great valour. She has resisted the Germans who attacked with sixty lakhs of persons. Nobody has ever invaded with such a colossal army in the whole of history. It has got to be said that if anybody fought with bravery it was Russia. The general public there fought for its country. Each and every child of that country is in the mainstream.

England rules over us. It is imperialistic. Yet I admire the bravery of the Englishmen. There is no doubt whatsoever that they are fighting for their own freedom but it is impossible that we side with an alien Government which has usurped our freedom. Yes, we should strengthen our *sangathan*, and we should fight for our own country. The question of our freedom is complicated. Our hands are tied down. If the administration had been in our hands, the masses would have fought with their whole strength. We have repeatedly stated that if the British declare India independent we would offer them help. But this did not happen. Instead, Mr. Amery and other officers have been making ambiguous statements. It is a matter of shame. They have made an effort to humiliate us and cause us damage. Today they are asking us to help them in the war effort but to help with closed eyes. But we will not do it. We have learnt the lesson that we have first to make our country completely free.

The question of China, the question of Russia, and many other similar questions are before us. Indians would have helped if the representatives in the Government were of the masses. Suppose, we wish to help China, then we cannot do it. You must have observed that in a war when any system is introduced, people start opposing it beforehand and

it comes to nothing. You know what is happening in India and in the whole world. But I do not know a single person in this country in whose heart there is no resentment against the Government. On all sides today there is resentment in the hearts of the Indians as they have been suppressed. They all know how tall are Mr. Amery's remarks. In our struggle and movement there have been minor disputes. Even in Russia there are disputes, and where do they not occur? The British Government should leave us and our disputes to us. I say frankly that we are now ready to win India's independence; we are ready to release India from slavery. Let them take their decision that they shall not interfere with it. Had this decision been taken just now, it would have been better. But those people who rule over India, do so just as the Nazis do to others. You have been seeing in India what the difference is between fascism and these people. Whatever Germany did, exactly the same thing has happened in India. I admit that there is no Nazism in the British Government. There is democracy to some extent. This is admitted. But what have we to do with it? When they take a particular step they say that all events do not concern India. By saying so they deceive the world.

The question before the Indians today is the question of independence. This question has already become known to the British Government, because when a country is ruled over by another country, then what is the duty of the former? That, until the raj is finished it would continue to rebel.

Those who do not think in these terms are not alive. A community, if it is a living community, cannot tolerate a foreign rule. As far as the method of rebellion is concerned, whether it should be peaceful or otherwise, is a different issue. But if it is a virile community it should rebel. Whenever people become prepared for raising the banner of rebellion in some form or the other they keep the nation alive, if they fail in this, it dies. A person whose heart is alive, comes to the right path. But what can a person do whose heart is dead? He cannot move about. You know that paralysis is a disease. The person suffering from it cannot walk or move about. The same is the case with lifeless nations. The duty of every colonial country is to revolt in some manner or the other, by any method, peaceful or otherwise. If it does not revolt it can be said to be suffering from paralysis. If Mr. Amery says, as he does so often, that there is no question of freedom of India, then does he, Mr. Amery, consider us fools? I do not know what he thinks of us. Let him now be rest assured that the Indians have understood such questions and that they will, under the tri-colour flag, attain freedom.

We will not be pacified by half-baked promises. We will not sit idle—we will not give up our struggle. In the circumstance in which this war has come, we cannot keep aloof from it. In the present war no country in the world can remain aloof from it. All are concerned with it. We have to consider its effect on us. Accordingly, we have to think about our duties and responsibilities. But in doing so we cannot forget that we have also to get our country emancipated.

Bombay is a city of merchants. It is a commercial city. On account of the war commercial concerns have increased. But whatever the needs of the British for goods, like fighting and other aircraft, it is astonishing that they do not make any effort about getting the same manufactured here.³ On the contrary the British Government has prevented their production. If there is a need for aircraft, the British should allow their manufacture in India. They are getting them from America at a higher rate, but will not allow their manufacture in India. Nowadays there is a need for ships.⁴ They are bought from America. Instead of encouraging ship-building industry in India the Government created every sort of obstacle. If these industries would have started their production then India would have benefited and the British Government too would have got its supplies at cheaper price. Knowing these advantages full well the Government does not give permission for their manufacture. I have heard that the Eastern Group Council has been formed.⁵ What worthless things they talk. Let them get prepared for whatever things can be manufactured in India. Let them give impetus to agriculture which is India's special concern. Why should the big factories of Australia produce things which can be manufactured in India? In India there are efficient workers, there are enough scientists; only help is needed from London. But the law is against it. If they give facilities, all these products can be manufactured here. It is not that the people of England can manufacture goods which the people of India cannot manufacture.

3. Walchand Hirachand, a leading industrialist, had offered at the beginning of the War, to set up an aircraft factory without subsidy provided that the Government of India agreed to purchase a fixed number of aircraft produced by the factory. But the Government did not place any order till October 1941.
4. The attitude of the Board of Trade and the Admiralty to the project of a shipyard at Vishakhapatnam worked out by Walchand Hirachand was negative. There was no proposal to give active cooperation to any such venture as part of the war effort.
5. An Eastern Group Council was established in Delhi after the conference on war supplies held there for a month from 25 October 1941. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 188.

On account of the work which the National Planning Committee did, sufficient benefit accrued to Indian industry. But the Government put all sorts of obstructions in our work. The National Planning Committee of India was under the impression that the Government desired to help it. But the Government did not like it. I was its Chairman. The Government wanted that I should not do any work while remaining in jail. The industry of India is being ruined. I am surprised at the sort of treatment which is meted out to India and yet the Government says that we should help it. Yes, it is a question of help. But there is no way for it.

As I told you the Government has challenged us. We have to give a reply to that challenge. What will be the reply? That will be known to you within four or five days. But I understand that if we have to reply to what the British prattle, to this British Government which has shown so much discourtesy towards India, our cooperation cannot be with it.

These are the questions before India. Brothers, you may garland the satyagrahis when they are jailed, and again garland them when they are released. This is a strange thing. I shall tell you about my province, where the number of satyagrahis who went to jail this year was half of those who courted imprisonment from the whole country. Mahatma Gandhi cancelled several lists. Several did not get permission. But what was the effect on the general public? There are several of our brothers who do not take interest in our work. They merely garland those who return from jail and that is all. And after three or four days they ask: 'When will you go to jail? Why is it that you do not go?' They think that going to jail has become a profession with the Congressmen. It has become their profession to go over and over again, and for others to garland them. Lakhs of men have been fighting in the war. Throughout the world so many people are dying, but if you also are not made of such stuff then of what use is your shouting? But if ten to twenty thousand persons from amongst you stand firm, I am pleased. What is to be done is to think about the freedom of India. All of you can do this. For this purpose even if you have to give your life, you should not be afraid of it. Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress have taught us to be fearless.

About two years back the question of satyagraha arose before us, Mahatma Gandhi started it and just now he has written an article in which he says that since satyagraha has been started, he is not going to

stop it as long as he is alive and until he gets what he desires.⁶ And during these two years certain young people have been saying that Gandhiji takes minor steps. I want to tell you a story. Ten or twelve years ago there was a Congress worker at Azamgarh.⁷ He made a very good arrangement and was determined that people should remain seated without moving at all, even if a snake happened to come out. Once a voice came 'mouse, mouse'. Afterwards I saw that it was a serpent. But they still remained seated there. There was so much discipline that nobody stirred his legs. Well, leave aside the story of the snake. Yes, I was saying that Mahatmaji conducted satyagraha for one year. Some people say that instead of individual satyagraha, mass satyagraha should be resorted to. This is right. But you cannot criticise. I do not know what benefit could accrue from mass satyagraha which would not accrue from individual satyagraha. I was greatly astonished at this criticism of theirs and their attitude towards the movement. Had we resorted to mass satyagraha we could have carried it on for about four or six months. Gandhiji conducted our satyagraha in such a comprehensive manner for two years that he saved India from a big crisis. This was not easy to achieve. I personally have great respect for Mahatmaji. No harsh words emanate from the lips of Mahatmaji howsoever much Mr. Amery may coax. Our freedom fight will continue and he will continue it. If Mr. Amery says "We are tired," then the war does not stop in any way and if he is tired then there is no question of our getting tired, he can get away from India's battlefield. We have of course to start the war. In this, you comrades, have to help us, whatever you can do, you may do. Failing that your coming here to this meeting becomes useless.

6. Mahatma Gandhi, in his statement of 7 December 1941, made it clear that he had "no authority to suspend civil disobedience on extraneous grounds; that is for the Congress to do.... For me personally there is no change. As a man sworn to peace at the critical moment, to suspend my anti-war activity would be to deny myself."

7. The reference is to Maulvi Masud Ali Nadvi.

15. The War in Malaya¹

Recent developments in Malaya² have filled our minds and my thought has travelled back to the visit I paid to that beautiful land four and a

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 20 December 1941. *National Herald*, 21 December 1941.

2. Japanese planes bombed Kedah, Kelantan and Penang in Malaya and the first line of British defence was broken on 16 December 1941. Penang was cut off from the mainland on 19 December 1941.

half years ago and to the many friends I made there. To all these friends and others, to all our countrymen in Malaya, I should like to say that although we are unable to be of much service to them in the present, our deepest sympathies flow out to them in their trials and misfortunes and we earnestly trust that they will face them with resolve, courage and dignity. India cannot and will not forget her children abroad.

16. To Syed Mahmud¹

Bardoli
December 21, 1941

My dear Mahmud,
Your letter of the 13th has reached me here in Bardoli. I am sorry you are not coming here.

It has surprised me that you should have read anything in my statement² which led you to conclude that the idea of complete independence for India is dead. What I said and what I have said for several years is that the isolated independent existence of all nations is dead. There must be sometime in future a world cooperation among nations. It is essential that India should break completely with Britain before it can think in terms of cooperation with other nations.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

¹ J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

² Syed Mahmud referred to Jawaharlal's remark to the press on 9 December 1941 that 'the idea of isolation of India is dead for ever'. See *ante*, item 3.

17. India's Attitude to the War¹

I congratulate the people of Gujarat in general and Bardoli taluk in particular for having shown their love and enthusiasm towards the

¹ Address at Bardoli, 26 December 1941. From *The Hindustan Times*, 27 December 1941; also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

Congress.² The country has been fighting for Swaraj for the last twenty years and the people of your taluka have a major share in that fight. The members of the Working Committee who have come from hundreds of miles are today engaged here in discussing the burning problems of the day.

Great events are taking place. The world is in the midst of a great war. India cannot be isolated. She is no doubt fighting for her own independence and she will carry on the struggle till victory is achieved but then she cannot close her eyes to what is happening elsewhere in the world.

To say that the war is being fought beyond the borders of India and as such is no concern of ours is a fatal attitude. Some people ask what would happen to India if Britain is defeated. There are others who say that India will fall victim to Japanese or German aggression.

We are opposed to Britain because we are in bondage. We are equally opposed to fascism and Nazism and we will fight them also to the last. We cannot, however, forget that the independence of our country is our first concern.

I think that after this war a new world order would emerge in which all nations would be free and the flames of this war would consume slavery. No nation in the world has achieved anything without sacrifice and India should be prepared to go through the ordeal. I have no sympathy with Hitler and his associates. Morally they are corrupt and they want to dominate the whole world. But that shall not be. We should combat these forces and express wholehearted sympathy with those nations that have fallen a prey to Nazi and fascist aggression. I have deep sympathy with the British people who are standing against aggression but hate those who stand for upholding imperialism and exploitation of the weaker nations.

2. The Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli from 21 to 30 December 1941.

18. Bardoli Resolution on Political Situation

*Confidential Draft for Working Committee on 25 December 1941*¹

Fourteen months have elapsed since the Working Committee held their last meeting⁴ and during this period the world has fallen ever deeper into the abyss of war and rushed headlong towards self-destruction. The members of the Committee have met again on their release from prison and given earnest thought to all the national and international developments during this fateful period of human history. The burden of guiding the Congress and the nation at this critical stage when old problems assume a new significance and war approaches the frontiers of India

*Confidential Draft (2) for Working Committee on 28 December 1941*²

Fourteen months have elapsed since the Working Committee held their last meeting and during this period the world has fallen ever deeper into the abyss of war and rushed headlong towards self-destruction. The members of the Committee have met again on their release from prison and given earnest thought to all the national and international developments during this fateful period of human history. The burden of guiding the Congress and the nation at this critical stage when old problems assume a new significance and war approaches the frontiers of India

*Resolution on 'Political Situation' passed at Bardoli on 30 December 1941*³

Fourteen months have elapsed since the Working Committee held their last meeting and during this period the world has fallen ever deeper into the abyss of war and rushed headlong towards self-destruction. The members of the Committee have met again on their release from prison and given earnest thought to all the national and international developments during this fateful period of human history. The burden of guiding the Congress and the nation at this critical stage when old problems assume a new significance and war approaches the frontiers of India bringing new

1 & 2. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. 3. *National Herald*, 31 December 1941, and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 January 1942.

Bardoli Resolution on 'Political Situation' was drafted by Jawaharlal. We present here the first and second drafts submitted by him to the Working Committee and the third draft adopted at Bardoli. The third draft was ratified at the A.I.C.C. session at Wardha on 16 January 1942.

4. The last meeting of the Working Committee had been held at Wardha from 3 to 6 November 1940.

bringing new problems in its train, is a heavy one which the Committee can only shoulder worthily with the full cooperation of the people of India. The time and the hour demand clear thought and vision, disciplined and united action, and a calm adherence to the high principles and objectives for which the Congress has stood for these many past years. The Committee have endeavoured to keep these principles and objectives in view and considered them in the larger context of world conditions and world freedom. The Committee are convinced that full freedom for the people of India is essential even in the present state of world turmoil not only for India's sake but for the sake of the world. The Committee also hold that real peace and freedom can only be established and endured on the basis of world cooperation between free nations and on world-wide disarmament. The freedom of

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India is thus envisaged as a part of the larger freedom for all peoples and nations.

The Committee gave full expression to their attitude towards the War in their statement issued on September 14, 1939,⁵ wherein they condemned Nazi and fascist aggression and expressed their willingness to help the cause of freedom and democracy, provided that the objectives of the war were clearly stated and acted upon, in so far as was possible, in the present. If freedom and democracy were those objectives, then they must necessarily include the ending of imperialism as well as fascism and the recognition of the independence of India. Subsequent pronouncements made on behalf of the British Government, their refusal to define the objectives of the war and their reactionary and oppressive policy in India, made it

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clear that this Government were determined to maintain and intensify their imperialist hold and exploitation of the Indian people. That policy was one of deliberate insult to Indian nationalism, of a reversion to unrestrained authoritarianism, and the encouragement of disruptive and reactionary elements. It was further aimed at the destruction of the nationalist movement, and while the Congress, in its desire not to embarrass the British people in their hour of peril had refrained from any form of direct action, the Government carried on war against the nationalist movement by imprisoning large numbers of people who were carrying on their normal activities. Many hundreds of prominent workers were thus imprisoned under the Defence of India Act without any trial. Every offer made by the Congress for an honourable compromise was rejected.

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 held ^{their} last meeting and during this period ~~the~~
 the world has fallen ^{even} deeper into the abyss of war and
 unbridled hostility towards self-destruction. The members of the
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~~thus~~ ^{thus} ~~unavoidable~~ ^{unavoidable} as a part of the larger freedom for all

WITH BHULABHAI DESAI, SYED MAHMUD, C. RAJAGOPALACHARI AND ASAF ALI AT A.I.C.C. SESSION, WARDHA,
JANUARY 1942



The Congress was therefore compelled, in order to defend the honour of the Indian people and the integrity of the nationalist movement, to request Gandhiji to take the leadership and organise satyagraha at such time and in such form as he considered proper. Mahatma Gandhi, desirous of avoiding embarrassment to his opponent as far as possible, especially during the perils and dangers of war, limited that satyagraha to selected individuals who conformed to certain tests he had laid down. That satyagraha has now proceeded for over a year and about twenty-five thousand Congressmen have suffered imprisonment, while many thousands of others who offered satyagraha in the Frontier Province and elsewhere were not arrested. The Committee desire to express their respectful appreciation of Gandhiji's leadership and of the response of the nation to it, and are of opinion that it has strength-

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ened the people.

Throughout this period the attitude of the British Government has been progressively more hostile to Indian freedom and it has functioned in India as a completely authoritarian Government, insulting with its general policy and its arrogant demeanour the deeply cherished convictions and feelings of the people. Neither the profession of freedom and democracy, nor the perils and catastrophes that come in the wake of war have affected that attitude and policy; and such changes as have taken place have been for the worse and have strengthened the conviction of the Indian people that there can be no peace or cooperation between them and this Government. To submit to this policy is to give up all that the Congress has stood for during the past twenty-two years.

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The recent release of a number of political prisoners has no significance or importance, and the circumstances attending it and official pronouncements made, make it clear that it is not connected with any marked change of policy but is apparently meant to create differences within the Congress. Large numbers of detenus, who are kept in prison under the Defence of India Act without trial, still remain in prison, and recent arrests of prominent persons⁶ and their treatment in prison indicate that the old policy is being pursued as before. The growth of Indian industry, in spite of the urgency of war demands, has been checked in many important directions so that British vested interests might continue. This release of political prisoners, therefore, does not lead to a changed situation but is a challenge to the Congress leaving it no alter-

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6. V.D. Savarkar, B.S. Moonje, Shyama Prasad Mookerji and other prominent Hindu Mahasabha leaders were arrested at Bhagalpur on 24 December 1941 and released soon after. Sarat Chandra Bose was arrested on 11 December 1941 and detained till 1945.

native but to continue its present policy.

While there has been no change in Britain's imperialist and authoritarian policy towards India, the Working Committee must nevertheless take into full consideration the new world situation that has arisen by the development of the war into a world conflict and its approach to India. While the Committee have no quarrel with the peoples of any of the warring nations and view with deep dismay their efforts at mutual destruction, they must express their condemnation of the unprovoked and unannounced aggression of Nazi Germany against the Soviet Union. The Committee have not endorsed in the past all the policies pursued by the Soviet Union but they have recognised that the Union stood for certain human, cultural and economic values which are of great importance to the growth and progress of humanity. They have

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watched with great interest the progress of this great experiment in human civilization and they consider that it would be a tragedy if the cataclysm of war involved the destruction of this endeavour and achievement. They have admired the astonishing self-sacrifice and heroic courage of the Soviet people in defence of their freedom and send to them their warm sympathy. The Committee also send their greetings to the Chinese people who, through four and a half years of devastating war and suffering, have never flinched and have set an example of unparalleled heroism.

While the Committee send their sympathy to all nations and peoples struggling for their freedom against armed aggression, the course of the war has brought additional conviction to them of the futility and madness of national wars for the settlement of disputes. Human civilization can no longer exist un-

its approach to India. The sympathies of the Congress must inevitably lie with the peoples who are the subject of aggression and who are fighting for their freedom. The Committee would thus like to advise the nation to align itself with the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war and to give support to them and help in their success, in conformity with its principles, to the best of its ability. But

its approach to India. The sympathies of the Congress must inevitably lie with the peoples who are the subject of aggression from any quarter and who are fighting for their freedom. But only a free and

less wars and the causes of war are eliminated, and it is essential that even in the storm of war, peoples and governments should recognize this and address themselves to this end. Military triumph alone will not ensure this and may result in the domination of one group of nations over another and consequent wars on an even vaster and more destructive scale than today.

India today, owing to past British policy, is weak and unprepared for waging effective war under modern conditions. Not only have the British Government angered and alienated the Indian people, but they have by their policy and lack of foresight and competence made it difficult for any effective steps to be taken. They have continued to treat the Indian people as a subject race and a hostile people, and in their desire to keep their imperialist hold have pursued policies which are not only shattering their Empire, but are also endangering

independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the large causes that are emerging from the storm of war. The whole background in India is one of hostility and of distrust of the British Government and not even the most far-reaching promise can alter this background, nor can a subject India offer voluntary or willing help to an arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from fascist authoritarianism.

only a free and independent India can be in a position to do so. The whole background in India is one of deep-rooted hostility and distrust of the British Government and not even the most far-reaching promises can alter this background, nor can a subject India offer voluntary or willing help to an arrogant imperialism which is indistinguishable from fascist authoritarianism.

India. The people of India are determined not to submit to foreign dictation or foreign rule and will resist any foreign invader. But under the circumstances they can only do so in their own way and their own methods or such as may be open to them, endeavouring to adhere to their principles and ideals.

The Committee are therefore of opinion that the resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed in Bombay on September 16, 1940 holds today and defines Congress policy still. That policy may be varied in detailed application by the Working Committee or by Mahatma Gandhi, as the changing circumstances may require, but in essentials all Congressmen should act according to it.

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19. Instructions Issued by the Congress Working Committee¹

Recent developments in the world situation have brought war near to India's frontiers. This may lead to internal dislocation in certain parts of the country and there is a possibility of some cities being subjected to aerial attack. Whatever dangers and difficulties might arise, the real antidote to them is to remain cool and collected and on no account to give way to nervousness and excitement. Congressmen must remain at their posts and continue their service of the people; wherever necessity arises they should yield places of safety to those in greater need and be ready to render aid to those who may require it.

The Congress can help and serve the people in the difficult times ahead only if its organisation is strong and disciplined and Congressmen individually and Congress committees are able to command confidence in their respective localities.

Congress committees and Congressmen should therefore address themselves immediately to the task of strengthening the organisation and reviving and maintaining contacts in villages and towns. Even villages should, as far as possible, revive the message of the Congress and be prepared to face such difficulties as might arise.

The constructive programme adopted by the Congress and explained from time to time by Gandhiji, is of particular importance at this juncture.² It is meant not only to bring about unity among various groups, to remove disabilities which keep sections of the community backward and depressed, to promote self-reliance and the cooperative spirit among the people, to increase production and have fairer distribution but also furnish the best opportunity and means of contacts with the people and service to them which are necessary for winning their confidence. The Working Committee, therefore, call upon Congress committees and workers to further this programme intensively and thus exercise a steady-going and strengthening influence in times of dislocation and uneasiness.

1. These instructions drafted by Jawaharlal were issued at the Bardoli session on 30 December 1941 and were partly printed in the *National Herald* on 31 December 1941. The full text is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahatma Gandhi's *Constructive Programme*, released on 17 June 1941, and published as a booklet in mid-December 1941, called for communal unity, removal of untouchability, prohibition, development of khadi and other village industries, village sanitation, basic education, uplift of women, education in health and hygiene, propagation of *Rashtra-Bhavna* (feeling of nationalism), learning of one's own language and working for economic equality.

During such times there is always a possibility of trouble being created by unsocial elements in the country. To avoid the emergence of such a situation and to meet it when it arises, volunteers should be organized in both the urban and rural areas. Such organizations should be formed on the basis of strict nonviolence and it should always be remembered that the Congress adheres to this principle. These volunteers may co-operate with other organisations working for similar ends. This volunteer organization is meant for rendering service to the people both normally and in the event of possible internal commotion. It should, therefore, avoid conflict with the authorities.

The prices of commodities have already risen and are causing distress among the people and no adequate steps have so far been taken by the authorities to meet this situation. These tendencies are likely to be accentuated in the future, and dislocation of trade and transport, due to stress of war, may lead to scarcity of the necessities of life as well as of many other things which are of everyday use.

Big-scale industries in other countries have suffered heavily on account of the war and transport of goods has become difficult on account of military requirements. China has largely overcome these difficulties by a widespread development of village industries. India may have to face similar problems, and village and cottage industries afford a solution, desirable in itself and more particularly suited to the needs of the moment. Such industries can escape to a large extent the effects of dislocation of trade and transport.

It is, therefore, necessary that this item of the constructive programme should be widely taken up and worked up with vigour and earnestness so that the countryside may be rendered, as far as possible, self-sufficient in regard to the necessities of life.

The Committee would especially recommend to the villages the growing of food crops at least to cover the needs of the village and appeal to the grain dealers not to hold up stores for profit but to release them for consumption at fair prices.

In case of emergency, when instructions are issued to the public by the authorities for the preservation of life and property and the maintenance of public order. Congressmen should avoid conflict with the authorities and they should carry out such instructions, unless they are contrary to Congress directions.

*The Committee do not contemplate any invasion of India in the near future, but in the event of any such attempt, Congressmen can on no account submit to it or cooperate with it even if the consequences of such noncooperation be death.**

* This last paragraph in italics was not published in the newspapers.

20. Reply to H. G. Wells¹

I have read Mr. H.G. Wells' criticism of my statement in the *News Chronicle*² with interest. Almost as a child I read his romances and enjoyed them. Later, I read his other books and profited by them. Eminent thinker and historian that he is, sometimes I have a feeling when reading some of his writings that he has gone back to the realms of romance.

Whenever he writes about India, he gives me this impression, for his knowledge of the past and present in India, of Indian history and culture seems to be singularly limited and derived chiefly from travellers' tales or the romantic effusions of some of his own countrymen. He does himself less than justice when he allows his cultured, far-seeing mind to deal with the vital problems affecting hundreds of millions of human beings after the manner of the Blimps and Pukka sahibs, whom he so dislikes. May I assure him that I do not consider him to be the British Empire or a person who has the least control over the British Government or British governing class?³ Nor do I expect anything from him except an intelligent appreciation of the world about him. That world is a little bigger not only in size but also in intellectual and cultural achievements than England or even Europe.

I am surprised at his saying that I refused to agree to the Sankey Declaration of the Rights of Man.⁴ As a matter of fact, I agreed then, but expressed my doubts about the effectiveness of such a declaration, and suggested that certain essential changes would have to take place in the world before such a declaration could have a real value. What surprises me still more is that he should have overlooked my explicit reference to the Sankey Declaration in the very statement to which he was

1. Bardoli, 30 December 1941. *The Hindu*, 31 December 1941.

2. In his letter to the editor of the *News Chronicle* on 23 December 1941, Wells attacked Jawaharlal's call for complete independence for "this wonderful special Indian people", and asked him to "realise that if we are to take a broad view only of peoples then the only sane thing is to combine with those who are attempting, by their advocacy of a common world law, a world federal control of armaments and transport and world federal conservation of national resources to arrest the first rapid drift to chaos in human affairs." For Jawaharlal's statement to the *News Chronicle* see *ante*, item 6.

3. Wells contended that he was "not a member of the British governing class, that my control of the British Government through the elections is insignificant".

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 116-117.

replying. Therein, I expressed my approval of it again. For many years, I have believed in world cooperation in all the various items he mentions and in additional matters also. I have written and spoken about this. I am perfectly prepared to cooperate with anybody to this end, but my world happens to include India also and my internationalism does not lead me to accept the imperialist *status quo*.

I am not aware of ever having demanded that the administration of India should be handed over to a small minority of political amateurs.⁵ I have demanded that the constitution and future destiny of India should be settled by a Constituent Assembly, elected by the people of India on the basis of adult suffrage. I shall be glad if Mr. Wells will tell me what other democratic way there is of settling these questions. As for our being amateurs, possibly he is right. But is he so very satisfied with the experts who control his destinies and ours? Even if we forget past history, recent events have not led us to associate much intelligence or competence with them. The average British expert in India is usually considered to be a monument of ignorance and incompetence.

Powerful cultures overflow to other countries, and there is a continuous intermingling of different cultures. India, in the course of six thousand years, has influenced others and has been influenced by them. Yet there is no other country in the world, barring China, which has had such an amazing continuity of cultural traditions which bind the country from Mohenjo Daro to the present day, there is that unbroken stream of culture and a sense of unity in common traditions and achievements.

Mr. Wells objects to my saying "the people of India."⁶ He is welcome to call them by whatever name he likes. But it is a poor tribute to the British Raj to say that after 170 years, it has not been able to weld India together. As a matter of fact, it has tried and still tries, as all empires do, to divide and disrupt. We have to face the consequences of this long endeavour. In any event, the British Raj is disappearing, whether Mr. Wells' countrymen like it or not, and nothing in the world can keep it functioning much longer. It has been a bad dream for us, but after all it is just a page in our long story and we are turning over the page. May I suggest to Mr. Wells to acquaint himself a little more with Indian history and cultural achievements?

5. Wells asserted that Jawaharlal demanded in effect that "the administration of all India should be handed over to a small minority of political amateurs representing, at the most extravagant, not one in 400 Indians and then, then we should see what we should see".
6. According to Wells, there was in India a multiplicity of peoples, languages and social cultures, "and if the string of the bundle, the old British Raj, is cut, the bundle will immediately fall to pieces".

21. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon¹

Bardoli
31.12.1941

Your cables.² You exhibit complete misunderstanding about situation here. The line you suggest is impossible of adoption by the Congress where every group strongly opposed it. Working Committee's resolution³ indicates no essential change. Gandhi is not leaving Congress⁴ but still cooperating plus carrying on his separate programme. Difference merely on theoretical issue of future.⁵ Present policy continues same for both. Can only change by independence and by vital changes. Going to Bombay then Allahabad.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Krishna Menon, in his cable of 30 December 1941, hoped that the Congress would rally the people against fascists, proclaim a position as in the days of the Spanish struggle and declare India's solidarity with Russia and China, irrespective of Indo-British relations.
3. See *ante*, item 18.
4. Mahatma Gandhi, in his letter to Maulana Azad on 30 December 1941, requested that he be relieved from the responsibility, laid upon him by the Bombay resolution, of leading the Congress individual satyagraha, as he could not accept the Bardoli resolution. The Working Committee relieved him of the responsibility of leading the Congress individual satyagraha but appreciated his initiative in carrying on the movement on his personal initiative.
5. The Working Committee, which met at Bardoli from 21 to 30 December 1941, was divided on the role of nonviolence. While Jawaharlal, Azad and Rajagopalachari were prepared for conditional support to the war, Rajendra Prasad and Patel insisted on no participation because of nonviolence.

22. Bardoli and Mahatma Gandhi¹

I am happy to see the progress of the Vyayam Mandal² organised by Sardar Prithvi Singh³ and wish that everyone should be strong enough to defend himself. The body should be developed along with the mind.

1. Address at Malad, Bombay, 2 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.
2. Bombay Ahimsak Vyayam Shala (Institute of Physical Culture).
3. Prithvi Singh Azad (b. 1892); joined Ghadar Party in 1919; associated with the publication of *Ghadar*; implicated and sentenced to life imprisonment in the Lahore Conspiracy Case, 1914-15, escaped and surrendered in 1938; member, Hindustan Socialist Republican Army; imprisoned during the Quit India Movement.

Some of the facts about the session of the Congress Working Committee are being distorted by some newspapers. It is not true that there is a split between the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi. The present Congress which is the creation of Mahatma Gandhi cannot afford to be separated from him. I myself have immense faith in him.

India cannot help the British in this war until and unless the question of the freedom of this country is satisfactorily solved. No slave country can help others for the liberation of other countries. Everybody in this country should be able to defend himself and his property against any aggression. For this purpose I am prepared to discard the principle of nonviolence and instead prefer freedom.

Mahatma Gandhi may carry on the satyagraha on his own initiative and not on behalf of the Congress.

23. Congress Unity¹

We are constantly told that the war has approached the doors of India. What are we to do now? Our British Government and the British papers say that we should help. Nowadays people appear worried over the rise in prices and the increasing difficulty in getting foodstuffs. This problem has always been there and is getting more and more aggravated. While the factory owners prosper, the workers are not getting their due share. There was trouble in Madras recently because of food scarcity.² There the people looted shops. Many of our brothers and sisters rejoice when they read in newspapers that the English are being defeated. But at the same time an anxiety is also felt as to what is going to happen.

I have heard that some big rajas and maharajas think that Hitler may win and the British Raj may get somewhat weakened, and so they are trying to occupy some more land and are augmenting their armies. But their army cannot do anything in the warfare of today because modern warfare is of aeroplanes. To recruit strong men and give them guns and revolvers has no meaning.

How should we view this problem? Should we view it as a spectator sees a show? If anybody today regards himself as a spectator, he either

1. Address at Dana Bandar, Bombay, 2 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.
2. Shops were looted in Madras on 19 December 1941.

does not understand the conditions of the world or is a full-fledged fool. None of us can escape from what is happening in the world.

Countries after countries are losing their independence. We do not know how long this war will continue. The problem before the world is how to stop the war, and if the war is not stopped, it will lead to the destruction of the world. There is no way to escape. The present war is not like the wars in the past.

You are aware of the big events that have happened, and the big revolutions that have taken place in the world. During this war many things have changed, and many more will change. Your life, and particularly that of the traders will change, for their root is based in gold and silver. Notes and *hoondies* are all made to stand on the foundations of gold and silver. Conditions may change and to become a millionaire and multimillionaire may become difficult. I do not say there will be no rich and poor, they will continue even then. I remember when a meeting of the National Planning Committee was held here, we were thinking as to how, if Swaraj came to India, we would be able to eradicate unemployment and poverty from India. There trade, commerce and industry, all sorts of things were discussed. We also discussed the question as to how fiscal matters might be regulated. I then stressed the need to introduce a new fiscal policy. There were some men of Bombay who were surprised then. But when they met me recently they agreed that the situation now was the same as I mentioned to them earlier.

The war costs the British some 25 or 30 crores of rupees every day.³ This, if multiplied by 365, will be a big sum. What sort of paper loan is this which India has to subscribe to?⁴ It is quite impossible to give this loan. If it were a small loan, we could have paid it up. And even if it is to be got back, how can it be raised? The British spend twenty-five crores every day by taking it from you, that is from India. They get it by levying taxes on the people. This money will come out of your pockets.

3. Sir Kingsley Wood, Chancellor of the Exchequer, told the House of Commons on 16 December 1941 that the British were spending about £11,750,000 a day on war—£9,000,000 on the armed forces and £2,750,000 on miscellaneous war services. The total war expenditure had reached £8,300,000,000 till that date.
4. Long-term defence loans were raised to finance the war effort. The first series of 1946 3% Defence Loan was issued in the first week of June 1940, and was replaced by another series at the end of August. The Second Defence Loan, 1949-52, was opened on 2 February 1941. These two loans totalled Rs. 80 crores. The Viceroy stated that India should aim at raising at least one hundred crores every year by way of loans for war finance.

Unrest is increasing in the world. Very soon the whole world will be affected. A great responsibility will have to be shouldered by us. All these are revolutionary events. A country like France vanished in a few days and became worse than a slave. We too are slaves. The British rules over us. But there are a number of people in our country who refuse to bow their heads. But there is a tragic situation in France. In the past it was a revolutionary country, but now it creeps like an insect. The fault is of the people there. I have not been able to know the causes of this degradation. You have experienced the power of the British who ruled gloriously, oppressively yet gloriously, for one and a half centuries. What has happened to them now? Nobody could have ruled without ability. They possessed ability and power. But what are we witnessing now? A powerful Empire is rapidly crumbling before our eyes. How is a fifty-storeyed building crumbling down so swiftly? Big people are sitting firmly there—the Governor General, the governors, the commissioners and from the Viceroy down to the *patwari*. But the truth is that they have lost the power.

I am not an astrologer. The British may win or lose, but now their Empire cannot go on. But this does not mean that you will get freedom without fighting for it. Whatever we get from the British we will get through our strength. It is not a matter for rejoicing that we get Swaraj out of their weakness and we remain incompetent as before. Throughout the world the British dominated, they ruled the oceans. But nowadays aeroplanes are a powerful weapon and the power of ships has become more or less useless. It is a different matter if any one country becomes the ruler of the world by gaining victory after victory, but in the long run it is impossible for the British to remain so. The empires of the future will be consolidated empires and not empires extending far and wide. Maybe, America's empire may be formed. It is a big country. It is just possible it may be Hitler who might unite some countries and establish an empire. But it cannot be an extensive one. It is necessary that all empires come to an end, and there be a new order. When we see the British Empire crumbling it looks bad, because the falling of a big thing does look bad. The British had a position. The British Government possessed a power. Perhaps it might remain as a second power in the world. Now the British say "Lay down your life in the war." I do not understand what we will gain or lose thereby. As for the gain we do not want that an Empire which rules over us should continue and keep us enslaved. We have to take Swaraj by our strength, not by their weakness. It is an intricate problem.

What I have told relates to the British Empire. Now the ability of the British to rule and to fight has decreased. Since the beginning of

the war, what has been the British attitude towards India? They have not thought about our gain or loss. They say that they are fighting for the freedom of the world. Leave aside the talk of freedom. The British have sustained a huge loss and they will sustain a further loss, because they have behaved selfishly towards India for their own gain. They have done nothing which may show prudence of the Government. So much so that when they act wisely they show so much folly that when the actual moment arrives, an enigma is created by their thoughts and acts, which does not admit of any solution. British policy is involved in all sorts of complications and by untying one knot two are created.

Two years ago when the war began, we issued a long statement in which we mentioned our dislike for Hitler and Nazism. If the British were fighting for democracy then we were ready to help. It was not likely that we could cooperate with the British as slaves. Even if we did try it was not possible to carry the Indian public to their side. They replied, but did not concede what we demanded. Whatever statements were issued proved worthless. The way in which the reply was given, was one of insolence. It roused anger. In addition they said many new things which none can forget. Yes, Swaraj is all right but, they said, Swaraj should be such as to be agreeable to all the communities of India. Thus if four persons out of forty crores say that they do not agree, or if the British traders, seated at Calcutta,⁵ who are themselves Englishmen, say that they do not like it, then how can Swaraj be given? What is all this tamasha? They are befooling us. They are taunting us.

Citizens of Bombay, the events which happened during the last eighty or ninety years in my province are not hidden from you. During the rising of 1857, the repression done there is remembered up to this day. This can be forgotten by us because to harbour enmity is not healthy. Somehow we got ready to tread on a new path, but we can move only when there is a new way. But every reply given by the British Government was such as to incite anger. And when it became impossible, the satyagraha was started. Many amongst us went to jail. Some have been

5. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which represented the European business community, in its letter to the press dated 8 May 1941, stated, "In our considered view the India policy of His Majesty's Government as propounded by the Viceroy on August 8, 1940, and in subsequent utterances by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, offers India the most effective means of simultaneously advancing her war effort and her constitutional status within the Empire". The Indian Chamber of Commerce replied on 13 August 1941 that the statement of the Bengal Chamber was "tantamount to supporting the continuance of the present undesirable *status quo*."

released. Some new events happened after our release. America and Japan joined the war. Nevertheless, our main stand is the same. We do not want that Hitler should win. Our sympathy is not with him. If Hitler comes to India, he will not treat India well. The question of giving and taking freedom is not involved. We can take freedom even from him. It cannot be had from anyone in the world for the mere asking for it from someone. Some of our people say that we should not side with the British Government and that Hitler's raj is preferable. It is possible that Hitler's raj may be good and it is also possible that it may be worse. If we want to live like men, we have to face the British Government, we have to think as to how we can get Swaraj, and in case Hitler comes, then how we are to oppose him.

As regards the British Government, they have made us completely unfit for self-protection. They know that if they make us strong then we would turn them out. For this reason they weakened us and made us unfit. Now they say that Indians should help them. Today Indians are not able even to help them in any way; such is the condition we have been reduced to. But whatever the condition may be, howsoever weak we may be, we cannot tolerate that one Sahib should go out and another Sahib should come in, and that we should be his slave. It is possible that we may not be able to oppose him, militarily. On such an occasion, I am sure, there are sufficient numbers of men here who will refuse to bow their heads and obey orders. You know what Hitler has done, and what Japan has done to China. How can you cherish hopes from them? It only means that after being slaves of the British Government we should become slaves again of the new aggressor. We cannot do that, nor shall we do it. It is not an easy question.

There is no country which is not involved in the war and which is not embarrassed. Countries which are out of it are also embarrassed. Take the case of Turkey.⁶ For two years she did not decide what to do and what not to do. It is right; why should the people of Turkey destroy their own country and jump into the war? But if the war does come, they are certainly brave men and will fight. Now the question is: Turkey being such a small country, how can mightier forces be faced? What has become of the army of the British today? Their army is certainly not small. But the war has got revolutionised. We require

6. In an effort to maintain neutrality in the Second World War, Turkey sought to befriend both sides. In May 1939 she signed the Anglo-Turkish Declaration of Mutual Assistance followed by the Non-Aggression Pact with France. In October a Tripartite Pact was signed between Britain, France and Turkey, though Turkey failed to secure an alliance with the U.S.S.R. In June 1941 she signed a Non-Aggression Pact with Germany.

peace. Such questions arise before every country. We should understand this and be prepared.

A great English *litterateur* has written that a very foolish and silly general won a war because the enemy was more foolish than he. Yes, he might have won. But no debating society ever won a war. What the writer of the book has written is a different thing. I may place my experience before you or may write a book, and you, in the capacity of spectators, may judge these questions. This is quite absurd. We should strengthen our *sangathan* and solve whatever questions come. After our release from jail, nothing new has taken place in India. The behaviour of the British has not changed, Mr. Amery continues to make undeserving statements. It is not a bad thing to be British. It is possible that after the establishment of democracy in this country capable British people may be employed in services. If they do not obey they will be expelled. But in the existing system even if Indian officers are appointed in place of the British, they will have no contacts with the masses. What does this mean? In the Executive Council there are Indians, but they are the henchmen of the British. The question is: in whose hands is the Government of India? Is it in the hands of the Indian public or somebody else's? There has been no change in the intention of the British Government. So long as they do not change their intention there cannot be any cooperation on our part.

Now we have to consider what arrangement we should make in our own country. You are aware of the questions which came before the Working Committee and the resolutions which were passed. Some people told me that the resolutions were not clear about the action to be taken. It is not very clear because the editors of the newspapers have started making somewhat exaggerated statements. By reading the editorials of the newspapers different meanings are inferred and this creates a wrong impression. For this reason I want to say a few things about the same.

First of all, it is a misconception that the Congress and Gandhiji have parted. People believe that during the discussions in the Congress Working Committee, there were two varied groups. Gandhiji is with us in every way. It is wrong to say that now this comradeship is not there. In the last twenty-five years the Congress has grown by pursuing the path chalked out by him and with his blessings. Mahatmaji is a tremendous force, a power, in our country. Even if we do not agree with him in any matter, how can we give up this great power? It is absurd. I have been working with him for the last twenty-five years, and have learnt a great deal from him and have discussed with him

whenever I did not understand anything. Whatever I could not understand in the course of discussions, I could never accept. Whatever decision has been taken by the Congress, the same has been taken by Mahatmaji. I do not think that I should believe in a thing with eyes closed. I regard such men as brainless who believe in anything with closed eyes. There is no difference at all between the Congress and Gandhiji. Therefore you should act according to what has been pointed out by me or by Bhulabhai Desai.⁷ But I do not want you to act like illiterate idlers. We have to make this country strong, so that the people can solve major problems and grasp higher principles. Only then can democratic norms be preserved. I go and speak to the people in an endeavour to make them understand, for it is my duty that in any situation, where I have to take a stand, I should make the people understand by telling the same to them.

In respect of the real task there exists no difference between Gandhiji and the members of the Congress. Both take steps in the right direction, and there is no difference of opinion in regard to the British Government. Mahatmaji is a man of very high ideas and he follows very high principles. He wants clarity on all issues. We cannot shift from the path he has chosen. In the last twenty-two years of India's struggle, I have fully accepted the principle of nonviolence, and my belief in it grew more and more as our struggle advanced. What sort of a thing is this war? Even a mighty country like France suffered defeat. Since then my belief in the principle of ahimsa has become firmer. At first when I studied the principle of nonviolence, I accepted it only for India's struggle, but now I think it useful for all wars. When I think of politics, my first objective is India's freedom. Swaraj has been on the threshold of India for the past fifteen years. What is in store for the world, appears very difficult for a politician to spell out. Therefore if necessary I may even give up the principle of nonviolence. First we should try to tread on the path of this principle. But India cannot become timid because of nonviolence for in our eyes nothing is worse than cowardice. Mahatmaji once said, that people should fight for their rights through nonviolence, but if they failed and lost strength, they should do so with the sword. However, this question is of the future, and not what is to be done at this moment. It is possible that any time this

7. Welcoming Jawaharlal at the same meeting Bhulabhai Desai had said that it was wrong to say, that Mahatma Gandhi had abdicated or that the Working Committee and Mahatma Gandhi had come to a parting of the ways. The aim of the Congress was complete freedom and there could not be any difference with Mahatma Gandhi on this. India could not cooperate with the British as long as they were indifferent to India's demand for freedom.

question may crop up. But at present so far as India and the British Government are concerned, there is no difference between the Congress Working Committee and Gandhiji. Both are of the same view as to what is to be done. There is unanimity of views as to the path that is to be followed. That is why Mahatmaji himself has observed that we cannot say what may happen in the future. It is therefore useless to say anything just now.

What have you to do at this hour? Has satyagraha, which has been going on for so many days, been stopped? For what purpose was it started and for what reason has it been stopped? Fifteen months have passed since the Congress Working Committee adopted the resolution regarding the satyagraha, that Mahatma Gandhi be given the power to lead the Congress and India and to make them follow the right path. Accordingly, Mahatmaji showed us one path and we followed that path for fifteen months. Ever since then, whatever news were available inside the jail and outside after leaving the jail, on the basis of that we considered that we should meet. Whereupon the Working Committee meeting was held. The opinion which Mahatmaji gave, was given after the night.⁸ He showed the path of wisdom and sagacity. There were occasions of considerable danger when he led us out of the same and showed us the right path. Gandhiji does not want to stop satyagraha but in view of the existing conditions he would offer it through particular persons and with less numbers.

War is nearing our frontiers. It is possible that it may reach places like the Assam Province. There Gandhiji does not want satyagraha to be carried on.⁹ On such occasions satyagraha is futile. Secondly, he wants that at this time the members of the Working Committee and the people from certain provinces should not be asked to offer satyagraha. They should go further and strengthen the *sangathan*. Gandhiji does not want to send such men so that he can have consultations with them on the questions which might arise in the coming months. Nobody can say anything about his opinion as to what day he will fix for the satyagraha. The question that arises is what should be done by

8. Mahatma Gandhi had been opposing the Bardoli resolution as being against the spirit of the Bombay resolution which he interpreted to mean as Congress stand against participation in war because of its commitment to nonviolence. He gave his consent to the Bardoli resolution on 30 December 1941 in his letter to the Congress President, but asked him to relieve him of the responsibility of leading the Congress individual satyagraha.

9. On 19 December 1941, Mahatma Gandhi advised Congressmen from Assam not to offer satyagraha, as the war had approached the borders.

those who are not satyagrahis? Some of them asked the question yesterday, whether they should engage themselves in constructive work. What to do? No one can say anything about tomorrow. But the satyagrahis should devote full time to *sangathan* and those who cannot devote full time, they too should give some time. There are big tasks facing the Congress and India. Let them assist in them, in strengthening the *sangathan* by enrolling members for the Congress. In the event of war there may be hardships caused by the enemy. But the truth is that people get nervous very soon. If we do not make arrangements for that, from right now, then troubles may crop up. In Bombay if water is stopped then life may become difficult. Hence, *sangathan* is very essential.

If bombs fall from aeroplanes how should we extinguish the fire? The attitude of the Congress so far has been not to take on the responsibility of the A.R.P. But if assistance and directions have to be given as to what is to be done at the time of danger, then the instructions of the A.R.P. have to be implemented. Whatever measures the Government may undertake should not be interfered with. In one way we cannot work in conjunction with them. But our own *sangathan* can assist in the A.R.P. work.

If anybody be in trouble, or in distress, then it is your duty to help. Your *sangathan* should be an instrument for achieving freedom. During war time your *sangathan* can resist the enemy also. Through this same *sangathan* we shall be taking over the government in our own hands and for that we have to get prepared as well. Any time the government may change and we may be left wondering—"What is the matter? What has become of the government?" We may be left thinking while some undesirable elements may come and establish themselves here. For such an occasion *sangathan* has got to be strengthened. As long as we have to live, we must live like men. We have to enlist volunteers. The public needs to be advised on problems which may crop up. This work should be done *mohalla*-wise. The main task is to help in the time of emergency.

These are sufficiently important points which I have placed before you. The Provincial Congress Committee and the Bombay Congress Committee should start this work from tomorrow—every day is important, every minute is valuable. In this your help is needed. Some forty thousand persons are sitting here. I want all of you to get prepared. Those who cannot give the whole time let them give one-fourth of their time. In the streets, in the *mohallas*, anywhere they like, they can work during that time. You should certainly be prepared for *sangathan*. In Bombay within two or three days *sangathan* can be organised very easily.

Bombay is a big city, all sorts of people are here. The labour organisations also can do a lot.

Since the outbreak of the war prices of commodities have shot up. The labourers have been given neither any increase in wages nor any bonus. This question has been sufficiently raised. The Board appointed by the Government met and recommended to the Government that it should accept their demands.¹⁰ I am astonished that the Board is in favour of the labourers and the recommendations of the Board are with the Government but still the demands have not been accepted. Whose fault is this? It is a matter of regret. In this way to create trouble for the labourers' wives and children and to breed ill will is to expose themselves to danger. On such an occasion ill will should be avoided. In this connection I would say that it should be the special work of the local Congress to see that the recommendations of the Board are implemented fully. Those people who create obstacles, whether they are factory-owners or big officers, should be forced to accept the demands. The duty of the residents of Bombay is that as far as possible they should do work for the people and should work unitedly.

I will tell you a true story about the Indians in Malaya,¹¹ who work in rubber plantations. They were fired at. It is a story of those who are poor. They wanted higher wages, at par with Chinese labourers. There was nothing improper in their demand. All planters agreed that the demand was proper. They reiterated that they would do what the Planters' Association recommended. Everyone said that the demand was just. They agreed to give more pay if all planters did the same. When the Chinese were given increments even at that time increments were not given to the Indian labourers. The Labour Commission appointed by the Government proved most inimical. The result was that

10. The Board of Conciliation, appointed by the Government of India, recommended in February 1940 that a dearness allowance at a flat rate of two annas per day be given while the war lasted to the cotton textile workers. This was to cover variations in the official cost of living index between 105 and 123. In an event of index numbers falling for any period for three consecutive months, an adjustment in the dearness allowance could be made.
11. By an agreement between India and Malaya in 1928, the Indian labourers in Malaya received 50 cents per day as the minimum wage. In 1941 Chinese labourers got one dollar 20 cents a day while the Indian labourers continued to get only 50 cents. The Indian labourers demanded a rise of 20 cents and went on strike in March-April 1941. Despite the intervention by the Central Indian Association and Government officials, the Government took no action. On May 6 1941, after the arrest of Nathan, President of the Klang District Union, there was a widespread strike which was suppressed by the Indian regiments in Malaya. The strike ended on 17 May 1941.

a strike took place there. The action of the Government before the declaration of the strike was brutal. It was aimed at pressurising the labourers. The Government announced that the labourers could not purchase anything from any shop without ration cards when ration cards were in fact not to be issued to the Indian labourers. The other action that they took was that they stopped water. The labourers began to die of thirst. I was astonished to read this. Why did they stop water? They stopped water, and did not concede their demand. They did not give even ration cards and turned out a man from the country but not his wife and child. They were separated. This they resented. They assembled again at different places. When the authorities thought that the jail and police were ineffective, the Australian battalion was called under Australian command. But the officers of the Australian army refused to meddle into the affairs of the labourers for they had come to fight the Japanese. Then the Indian army was called. The Indian soldiers were not aware of the actual situation. Moreover soldiers of an army cannot refuse the orders and so they fired at them. Many labourers were killed, some were injured and about 300 persons were arrested. The ring leaders were sent to Calcutta. They are in Vellore Jail under D.I.R. I have told you the whole story from the beginning to the end based on a Government report. So you know what sort of treatment was meted out to the Indians in Malaya. The Indians were fired at. This is what they got for a demand which was legitimate. Since last month more than half of Malaya is under the control of the Japanese.

It is your responsibility to see that the police do not get a chance of repression and thereby gain control. It would be most unfortunate at this hour. The Congress Committee should help in keeping peace in the city of Bombay by organising the people. The reality is that the number of those who will look after arrangements is small and there is a lot of work. Your help is very necessary. You should all work unitedly.

In China the war has been going on for so many years. China would have been finished if they had not organised themselves. The big cities like Chungking are in ruins. The factories there have been destroyed. This was very easy to do. The Japanese destroyed the Chinese trade in particular to create a market for their own goods. But they proved wrong because the Chinese produced goods in each and every village. They organised cooperative societies. They started producing with their labour without machines. Now even if the enemy bombs it cannot stop production. If people want they can carry their little factories in their armpits. Wherever there is Japanese occupation, there the management remains in the hands of the Chinese. Thus the Chinese strengthened

their *sangathan*. This has been of great help. I think that 30 to 40 thousand such factories have been established and are outside the danger zone. We too can face the war in the same manner. Otherwise it is not possible to face it in the ordinary way. The domestic crafts should increase. It has got to be done if it is not yet done. The resolutions of the Working Committee about all issues must have reached you. In this war anything can happen. But if the Government has mismanaged, let us take the management in our hands and let all of us organise ourselves at all the places. We cannot cooperate with the Government. Those days are gone when our work could be stopped by the help of the police and the military. By augmenting trade we can give help in many ways. And let us help the labourers in their demands, let us help in the field of domestic crafts. Thus we see that by unity we can do all big works. Let us achieve big things and thereby win freedom for this vast country.

24. The Reality in India¹

Dr. Edward Thompson is a valued friend who has stood up for India's freedom and helped to put our cause before his countrymen. His advice must command consideration. But I must say that the suggestion made in his letter to the *Daily Herald* of London² ignores the real situation in India. In India and elsewhere the pace of events during the past two years has made a tremendous difference to people's minds and none of us, even if we so willed, can ignore this solid background of reality. We are not functioning like the legendary ascetics but are trying to come

1. Bombay, 3 January 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 6 January 1942. This was written in reply to Edward Thompson's open letter printed in the *Daily Herald* on 1 January 1942.
2. Edward Thompson had stated that "the war has changed so greatly, that India is not a subject country providing contingents of soldiers but a principal one. If she does not stand fast, it is hard to see how the whole eastern half world can stand fast." While praising the Indian soldiers, he said that only "fascist victory can prevent the Indians emerging from the struggle as a sovereign people." He requested the Congress to change its policy with regard to the war. The British Government had acknowledged India's right to full control of her affairs and the Indian statesmen should take independent action and join the war effort like "brave men in many lands who are giving all they have and not for their own cause alone."

to grips with the reality of today and the coming reality of tomorrow. It is the British Government which lives in the yesterdays that are no more. Not only in India but in regard to every thing else they stick to the old ruts as the world advances and changes leaving them behind. Just as war today requires novel and aggressive tactics in order to be effective, even more so do the other major problems of today and the picture of the peace that we hanker after require novel and aggressive methods and a capacity to take risks. It is not enough to be on the defensive and seek to maintain the old and the out of date for that is already doomed. To stick to it is to catch the infection of decay.

Dr. Thompson advises us to ignore the British Government and go ahead. This sounds very brave but it is not clear what it means in terms of the present. As far as I can see a country cannot go ahead in the way it desires so long as that country is bound hand and foot by an authoritarian government. Every effort that it makes brings it into conflict with the Government. Full freedom is essential for it to function effectively.

It appears that there is a great deal of misapprehension in the London press³ in regard to the Bardoli resolution and it is imagined that there has been a break with Mahatma Gandhi. There has been and can be no break with him for he represents the mind and heart of our people as no one else can. We may differ from him as we have done in the past in regard to particular matters but we are proud of him and his leadership and the bonds that tie us to him are not going to snap.

3. The *Daily Telegraph* carried the headlines, "Mr. Gandhi Abdicates—Congress Support for Britain", the *Daily Mail* announced, "Mr. Gandhi Split with Indian Congress", the *Evening News* said, "Mr. Gandhi sacked as 'Gesture', India may now join Empire War Effort."

25. To Mahatma Gandhi¹

Allahabad
January 5, 1942

My dear Bapu,

I arrived here last night. The events at Bardoli have naturally made me, as others, think furiously. I do earnestly hope that by the time we

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

meet at Wardha a satisfactory way out will be found, pleasing to you and to others. It is too sad that at this critical juncture there should be anything leading to confusion in the public mind. I hope to reach Wardha on the 11th evening and to present myself at the Ashram the next day.

In drawing your programme for the journey from Wardha to Benares, I should like you to consider the advisability of breaking journey for a few hours at Allahabad, then taking a more convenient train. This might save you a night's discomfort and arrival at Benares at a very inconvenient hour at night. This is not meant to trouble you in any way in Allahabad where few persons need know about it, but solely in the interest of your comfort and convenience. Possibly I might travel with you from Wardha as I intend going to Benares also.

Indu is in Bombay and will probably reach Wardha about the same time as I do.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

26. The Bardoli Resolution¹

I entirely agree with the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli. Since the Working Committee passed it at Bardoli a fortnight ago, so much has been said about it that there remains little for me to add. Many persons have interpreted the resolution and raised their objections, which absolutely have no connection with the resolution itself. The resolution was criticized in one of the districts of the United Provinces. The persons who discussed the resolution could not explain why they objected to it. It is the general impression that there were wire-pullings behind the resolution. There is nothing in the resolution with which any member of the A.I.C.C., whatever his views, can disagree.

1. Speech on moving the resolution at the A.I.C.C., Wardha, 15 January 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 16 January 1942, *National Herald*, 16 January 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India. For the text of the resolution see *ante*, item 18.

Some confusion, however, has arisen from Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the Congress President and the Working Committee's resolution relieving Mahatma Gandhi of the responsibility of leading the satyagraha movement. Recently frequent references have been made to the differences and 'groups' in the Working Committee² and with one of the alleged groups my name has also been associated. I may tell you in confidence that there are not three but fifteen groups. Each individual member of the Working Committee forms a group and such differences are necessary for progress. There are differences between me and Rajaji. He has been emphasising other points of the resolution.³ I am, however, proud to move the resolution which will be seconded by Rajagopalachari.

The British administration has been modelled on the lines of the rule of Hitler. The political prisoners have been released, but this has not changed the spirit or the essence of the British administration. Time has passed when India had to be seen through London's eyes. At this stage the talk of coming to terms with the British Government is out of the question.

The question before me is how my country will be free. The instrument for securing this end are the millions of Indians. The idea that I should go begging at the doors of Englishmen for the freedom of the country does not arise at all. I thought that the eyes of Englishmen would open at least at this hour of great calamity. In our country there is indignation in the heart of every Indian against the British. In U.P. the eyes of every cultivator become red with anger when he thinks of the events which took place in 1857. In 1857 the rivers flowed with blood. I thought that the eyes of Englishmen would open. We see every day how inefficiently they are fighting this war. It is impossible that the problem of India would be solved by Englishmen.

2. Mahatma Gandhi, in his statement of 30 December 1941, had stated that the Working Committee had expressed its readiness to open its door for participation in the war but had not stated the terms on which that door could be opened. He could not participate in any war because of nonviolence. There were three schools of thought in the Working Committee: "A minority party believing in non-participation on the ground of nonviolence pure and simple. The other believing that the Congress should not carry nonviolence to the point of refusing association in the war under any circumstances; and there is the third which has many reasons almost as strong as the decisive reason of nonviolence guiding the minority."

3. Rajagopalachari, at the Madras District Political Conference on 4 January 1942, stated that if the British "entrusted the Indians with the defence of the country and other necessary powers, Congress will not shirk responsibility. This is the gist of the Bardoli resolution." In his view, the Bardoli resolution only sought a categorical promise of independence and a provisional settlement.

The rule of the British is marked by a tendency to lower India and the Congress in the eyes of the public. Britain wants that India should be ruined. A compromise may be possible between Britain and Hitler. It is however impossible that slave India would try to come to a compromise with the British. Whatever calamities may befall India, she will never bow to Britain. Maybe free India might throw her weight on the side of those countries with whom Britain may be in agreement but that does not mean a settlement with Britain. She lost her opportunity of a settlement with India two and a half years ago.

Some people are talking about returning to parliamentary activity.⁴ The whole idea is ridiculous. Who knows what will happen in the next six months? In the face of these uncertain conditions our real work lies in the country—the organising of every province, town, village and ward for every eventuality, raising volunteers to preserve order and protect the people. There is plenty of work to do. The constructive programme will keep our hands full preparing the country to be self-sufficient.

4. Satyamurti, presiding over the Madras District Political Conference on 4 January 1942, stated that in these critical and abnormal times, the Congress should capture every position of power and use them so as to enforce the acceptance of the "natural demand" by the Government and intensify the struggle for the freedom of the country.

27. Violence and Nonviolence¹

It is a wrong tendency to be carried away by slogans and catchwords. So far as I can see, Communists,² Socialists,³ and Gandhiites are equally

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C., Wardha, 16 January 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 January 1942.
2. Radhabai Subbarayan moved an amendment on behalf of the Communist Party emphasising the need for the Congress and India to align themselves with the "noble, fine and progressive" forces of the world.
3. On behalf of the Congress Socialist Party, Farid Ansari moved an amendment urging the development in the country of a national authority competent to watch the interests of the people, and asserted that steps should be taken to convene a constituent assembly with a view to creating in the country both the atmosphere and sanction necessary for asserting India's right to play her role in changing the world.

victims to this tendency. Socialism or Communism never meant application of abstract theories based on experiences of Western countries without regard to conditions in India. The suggestion of the Congress Socialists to convene a constituent assembly is, in my opinion, impracticable at this juncture, although I believe that ultimately a constituent assembly alone can decide the fate of India.

I fail to understand the attitude of those who talk of "hundred per cent nonviolence"⁴ but tolerate the present economic and social structure based on violence and injustice and hope to build up a new structure by means of bringing about a mental change among the capitalist and propertied classes. I disagree with Babu Rajendra Prasad and his friends who said that they did not want that type of freedom which England and America were having. I, for one, will any day accept that type of freedom, imperfect though it is, and would then try to remedy the defects and build up a new structure of society which will be free from periodical wars and the use of violence.

4. Rajendra Prasad, making a statement on behalf of those Congressmen who believed in nonviolence, stated, "It is politically wrong in our opinion to involve the country in war at this time. We wish that India should not be in this war and on the present occasion also in the least relax its hold on the principles of Ahimsa." He asserted that since the resolution did not call upon taking up arms they would not resign from the Working Committee.

28. Congress and the War¹

In this town of yours, some big problems were discussed during the last two or three days. I do not know how many persons had the opportunity of listening to the discussions. Many must have read about them in newspapers. I cannot say whether there has been any effect of these discussions on students. We generally fail to bring the thoughts to the common people.

You want Swarajya, but you cannot afford to give up doing your daily work. But politics is a thing which interests you even though you are

1. Address at Gandhi Chowk, Wardha, 18 January 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 January 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

engrossed in your daily activities. Politics is like a war. It dominates every household. No one can keep aloof from it. When one slave country is ruled by another country, there is a fight, because the slave country wants to become free. If that country does not do so, that is, does not want to become free, it is like a corpse. If the leaders give up the idea of attaining freedom, it can be said that the country has become dead. The British rule has been in existence in India for a sufficiently long period to make her millions lifeless. Still there were a sufficient number of people who always fought for freedom and who have kept the country alive. This fight cannot stop until foreign rule ends.

About ten or fifteen days ago, there were rumours that Gandhiji has separated himself from the Congress. This is not true. His views on the present situation are before you. India has changed so much during the last twenty years by Gandhiji's efforts. It is impossible for the Congress to leave Gandhiji.

Students should study politics and current events and be prepared to play their part well in the national struggle and in national reconstruction like the British students who today have left their studies in order to defend their motherland.

Do not run away when villages and towns are being bombed, but help the victims and conduct them to safe places and face any eventuality courageously. Do not get panicky as it weakens our morale as it did in the case of Holland, Belgium and France which surrendered in spite of big armies. Stand at the duty post. Organize volunteer and other organizations. Strengthen the Congress, secure the help of non-Congressmen for meeting the imminent crisis which is approaching owing to the Japanese menace. Increase your strength for fighting the enemy and for winning freedom by peaceful and nonviolent means. You can do work only if you try to do it. A carpenter has to work with instruments which are useful in his craft. A politician has to deal with men. The Students Federation passed a resolution condemning individual satyagraha.² This was improper. Instead of indulging in this wild talk, they should themselves have practised satyagraha.

Institutions have to be run on certain principles. There is no need to be nervous. Students have to face the problems of their country. They cannot keep themselves aloof from the satyagraha. A flowing stream carries water which has life-giving properties. If a portion of the stream separates itself from the mainstream it loses its identity.

.2. The All India Students Federation, presided over by Hiren Mukerjee on 26 December 1940 at Nagpur, characterized the individual satyagraha as waiting for terms from British imperialism and urged mass struggle.

If we bow to the British we shall become useless. As a result of the noncooperation for twenty years the strength of the country has increased. Britain may be losing the present war. But this does not mean that our actions should please the Germans or the Japanese. Our principle should be not to bow to any nation. Our struggle against the British has taught us that we cannot bow to any power. France had to surrender because the people there had a slavish mentality. We cannot afford to develop that mentality.

We have to face new problems resulting from the war. The prices of foodstuffs are shooting up. Shops were recently looted in the Madras Presidency. Many trains have been stopped. In two or three months it will be impossible to transport goods from one place to another. We have to organise ourselves, and find a way out of these difficulties. There are many people who say that by joining the army, we can serve our people. I myself want everybody to learn how to use a gun. I am however of opinion that to enlist in the British army is to invoke slavery.

29. Mahatma Gandhi and Swaraj¹

Once more I stand before you to tell you some very important facts about our mother country. I want to tell you very frankly that it is quite difficult for anyone to give a satisfactory answer to the important questions of the present day. All over the world blood is being shed, mighty nations are falling and large armies are marching and bringing ruin on the mankind. It would not be proper on such an occasion for any nation to play the role of a disinterested spectator.

People ask, and rightly too, what should they do? I think I can answer this question very satisfactorily and easily. But if anybody asks me what will happen after a month or two I will not be able to answer that question, and I think no one else shall be able to do so. After six months, or after a longer period, British imperialism may come to an end. If your endeavours and relentlessness are a cause of its downfall you would be justified in your cheers, but if it falls because of its own weakness we shall have no right to cheer, for we would have played no

1. Speech at the 16th session of the Benares Political Conference, 23 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

role in its fate. We should therefore see the problems in correct perspective before we take a new step. We have to face the facts whether we like them or not.

If there are many among you who say that they have nothing to do with political affairs except to attend meetings from time to time, look at their leaders and hear their speeches, or if you say that you are too busy with your domestic affairs or in your businesses or professions to pay attention to other things, then you are keeping aloof from what is happening in the world. Do you think that in any country of Europe and Asia where war is going on, as in Russia and China, any businessman can claim not to be concerned with political affairs at all, and say that he has only to run his business? This can never happen. War surrounds him from all sides, bombs fall on his head also, armies march near him, all his business is upset, and he has to thank his stars if his life is spared. This is not the situation in our country as yet but no one can guarantee against its possibility.

Whether this is possible or not, our country has been caught in the vicious circle in which the whole world has already fallen. At this juncture with cool heads and without the least confusion we should decide about our actions. Holding meetings in districts, delivering speeches or passing resolutions will do no good unless we undertake practical work. Holding meetings gives us a chance to assemble and think over certain problems. But we have to find our own way and work accordingly. If in the meetings we only deliver speeches and then go home, the real work that we have to do will remain undone. Our deeds, our meetings and our revolutionary slogans become ineffective and we become so worthless that we lag far behind the other countries of the world.

The present-day world is a free world and every individual, nation, community and country is recognised as being on the same level. Making noise and shouting slogans do not add any weight to the present-day world. Great deeds, enthusiasm and courage give weight to it. I want that in this session which is being held under the presidentship of Balkrishna Sharma we should consider and decide what we have to do at this time.

The All India Congress Committee, after paying due consideration to this question, has placed before the country a few fundamental principles on which everyone should act. Not only Congress workers or satyagrahis who courted imprisonment but even four-anna members of the Congress should act in accordance with them. The people also should know what they have to do because it is they who constitute the country. 40 to 50 lakhs of ordinary members are enrolled in the Congress registers but actually the number of the Congress members is in crores. Apart from the members who are enrolled in the Congress registers there

are men and women who sympathise with the Congress aims or look at the Congress as a great organisation of the country, which is leading them toward freedom and independence. There are also those who are well-wishers of the Congress and acknowledge its services. It is true that any increase in the number of the members of the Congress will add to the strength of this organisation. But at this time our words and messages are meant not only for the Congress members but for all the people of India because the Congress and its members alone are not concerned with them. It is a question of 40 crores of men and women of India. Whatever decisions are taken, each and every individual should act upon them, and should act promptly because nobody knows whether after two, four or six months, you will get an opportunity to act at all. If you waste time and do not avail of this opportunity, you will not be able to rise to the occasion.

As I told you just now, the A.I.C.C. meeting was held at Wardha. It was a big panchayat of the Congress, and, as it generally happens on such occasions, discussions took place. During the Wardha meeting discussions were also going on in the press. Having read these, many of you must have been worried about the controversies in the Congress. What was the difference over which there was a dispute between Mahatma Gandhi and other Congressmen? There were misunderstandings, and rumours were spread which worried everyone. You were in the dark so you were anxious. Why was it so? All of us should pursue one and the same path according to the decision reached after discussion. We must maintain our organisation. We must cooperate with one another in spite of differences in our views. We should abide by the decision of the panchayat which is, in other words, a decision of the masses, and therein lies our strength. If we cannot do this, and if every man pursues his own course and organises fifty or ten or twenty parties, howsoever wise and prudent we may be, our strength will be shattered and our strong organisation will be weakened. If there is a split in the front ranks of the Congress or among its prominent leaders, what will the helpless masses do? Many people misunderstood and thought that Mahatmaji had severed his connection with the Congress. Everyone knows that if that were true we would be handicapped in our work. But all these were the views of the press which were exaggerated and misleading. I warn you not to fall in their trap.

You know that the Congress has gained much strength during the last twenty-two years. It is now only fifty-seven years old. But in the last twenty-two years it has become a powerful organisation and has gained great popularity among the masses, that is, among the cultivators, workers, petty businessmen and other artisans. Its power has also increased.

How and why did it increase? Who has done all this? You are aware of it. There is no need to tell it. It was all done by Mahatma Gandhi. He gave a new garb to the Congress, taught new methods and showed a new way to it. We, the millions of men and women of India, followed him and under his leadership we advanced ahead. Our power also increased and as compared to the past, when our backs were bent and our heads hung low, our backs became straightened, our heads are now held high and we have gained courage. While formerly we were afraid of saying the feelings of our own hearts into our own ears, we can now say them openly and loudly. Why should we not say what is in our minds and hearts? If we want to make our country free why should we not say so loudly and work for the organisation which would create a new world for us and which has already made us take a big step forward in this world? Whatever we have done in this world we have learnt from Mahatma Gandhi. Under the circumstances how can we think of Gandhiji leaving the Congress? All these are idle talks; do not be misguided by them. He has made the Congress, he cannot leave it.

It is right that when intricate problems arise, it becomes our duty, on whom the responsibility rests, to give our considered advice and to find a way out. It is our duty to hold on to our own views and support them vigorously, and to point out the weaknesses of any advice which we consider to be wrong. But the final decision reached by the panchayat must be accepted by all, because till now the power of the masses or that of the Congress or of any other organisation has increased only in this manner. If we follow a path blindly, howsoever great a leader might have shown that path, we cannot make any progress because ultimately weakness creeps in. When people say to me that Mahatmaji is a great leader, he will win Swaraj for us and will do away with all our miseries and troubles, it does not appeal to me in the least. The people who say so, do not tax their brain. Of course, he can do everything all alone. Why should we then exert ourselves? This is quite wrong. All of us have to undertake the journey to Swarajya. Had Mahatmaji undertaken this journey alone, he would have reached the goal long ago. You have to traverse the way on your own legs and unless your legs are strong enough, Mahatmaji cannot carry you there. He himself or some other people, who follow in his footsteps, can reach there. Therefore it is necessary that we and the masses should also understand these problems. Yes, there may be occasions when on certain questions there may be a difference of opinion with Mahatmaji. But the question is that all of us should accept the decision arrived at by the panchayat.

Mahatmaji is a great man; what can I say about him? But I want to tell you particularly about the recent meeting held at Wardha, how it

was conducted and what decisions were arrived at the meeting. When he saw that there was a difference of opinion in the ranks of the Congress, he exerted his full influence in order to make sure that the Congress went united on its way.² We gave due consideration to all the points raised and have emerged stronger than before. The resolution was passed by the A.I.C.C. and all of us were united and everyone was ready to follow the same path. Do not be misguided that there was any friction. It is possible there may be a difference of opinion and also discussions, so much so that the issue may have to be put before the people, but there cannot be two opinions on the fundamental principles. Anyone who is in the least connected with the Congress cannot differ on them. This is the first thing that you should understand.

The other thing, at which you must be wondering, is why the satyagraha offered till recently has now been suspended. What does it mean? You know that Mahatmaji had started individual satyagraha movement. Had he allowed mass satyagraha, lakhs of people would have offered satyagraha in our province and it would have stirred the whole province. But after considering all the circumstances, he did not think it advisable and selected only a few individuals for the satyagraha campaign. I myself am of the opinion that, considering the world situation and the situation of our own country and also many of the hard battles that are ahead, and for which we have to be ready, whatever Mahatmaji did then, was in the fitness of things, and we have benefited by it. Had he then asked to launch mass satyagraha movement, I have no doubt that we would have done it with all enthusiasm; but our aim was to preserve our national strength so that we could fight with all our strength in the battles to come. Had we not done so, we would not have maintained our strength and its ultimate result would not have been good. But in this connection other people have also expressed their opinions. I, too, want to express my opinion before you.

Inside and even outside the jail I held the opinion that the nonviolent way in which the "individual satyagraha" was carried on was correct, leaving aside a few points which are debatable. Considering the present and past conditions that satyagraha was right. Why has it been suspended then? Not because there were differences about it among the people but the reason for its suspension was that a more responsible work

2. Mahatma Gandhi, in his speech at the A.I.C.C. on 15 January 1942, recommended that the Bardoli resolution of the Working Committee be accepted by the A.I.C.C., and asserted that despite the fact that "India's participation in any war before the attainment of complete independence is to undo the work of the past twenty years", he wanted the resolution to be passed since it "reflects the Congress mind."

than merely going to jail confronted us. For most of the people it is a hard job to go to jail, but for many others it has become just an ordinary affair. They are always prepared to go to jail. However, to go to jail has no significance in the modern world. Under the instructions of the Congress millions of people, on whose support the Congress stands, are prepared to go to jail. But considering the burden of the present responsibility we should give up such tendencies and begin the task that we have been asked to do. It was this that Mahatma Gandhi thought. Considering the conditions he may again launch individual satyagraha movement, and responsible people, in their provinces, districts, *mandals*, or wherever they may be, should guide the public that seeks guidance from them. They should not at present go to jails for they have to show the right path to the public. Even now Mahatmaji wants to continue anti-war satyagraha.³ But individual satyagraha movement is not of much importance. For this reason Mahatmaji took this decision at Bardoli.

At present there is panic in certain provinces, like Assam, Bengal, and in the city of Calcutta. In the city of Calcutta people are worried. They are greatly perturbed about the possibility of being bombed from the air. In such a condition if we go and ask them to launch satyagraha against the British Government, it will not carry weight. At this time we have got to support them. If they are worried we have to dispel their worries. In such a state of affairs if 100 or 400 people offer satyagraha nobody will seriously pay any attention to them, because people are expecting an air attack. Even so, the satyagraha movement was not suspended on the ground that people had divided opinions about it. It was suspended because the object was to show to the world that though we are not participating in this war, we have to organise ourselves to face bravely the dangers that lie ahead. Whether the bombs fall, or internal disturbances occur, we should be able to serve the people, protect them, and teach them how to protect themselves. For us these things have become important. They are no longer trifles. It does not matter much if they appear trifles in the resolution. Behind them lies a long history and we have got to implement them even if we have to go to jails. At present we should carry on the Congress work but if we are arrested we shall go to jails with pleasure.

3. Mahatma Gandhi, in his statement of 7 January 1941, stated that civil disobedience in the sense in which it was launched earlier was not likely to be revived on behalf of the Congress till the war had ended. He proposed to re-start the *Harijan* and to carry on propaganda against the war. If this right was not conceded he would launch token civil disobedience.

Now what is the situation? Just now a kisan brother called out from the back that prices have gone up and that I alone can check them. Well, prices have increased but I cannot do much to control them. It is beyond my power. The Government of the country alone can do it. But it is futile to look upon the Government of the country which is good for nothing. But we can do something—of course we can. At this time the difficulties of the people are increasing. After two or three months, they will grow further because the movement of goods to big cities from other countries or from other cities and the countryside, is by and by slowing down. Even in the countryside people have become dependent upon outside goods. Not only will the import of foreign goods decrease, but movement of domestic goods will also be stopped, because of the reduction in the number of trains. Restrictions have been imposed upon us even on the occasion of *Magh Mela*.⁴ Tickets for Allahabad or for Kashi are not being issued. The reason is that many railway carriages and railway lines have been removed and sent to Iraq and Iran for military use, which has resulted in a shortage here. The number of the remaining trains has also decreased because many of them are engaged in transporting goods and ammunition to the theatres of war.⁵ The number of goods and passenger trains is decreasing every day, and perhaps it will further decrease. Consequently the goods coming from other provinces and from foreign countries will also go on decreasing. This has led to trade difficulties. Kisans, too, who are dependent on goods from outside are affected. And so will be the case with those who live in cities. What shall we do when this difficulty arises? Just see what is happening in Andhra and in Madras Presidency where foodshops and grainshops are being looted. What else can hungry people do? What can we say to them? In certain cities the graindealers have hoarded the grain in order to earn greater profit when the prices increase. I wish to remind these dealers that trade of course means making profits. But if at the present time of crisis they choose

4. Under the Defence of India Rules a ban was imposed on railway travel for "the purpose of taking part in the *Kumbh Mela*" from 4 January to 4 February 1942.

5. Sir Andrew Clow, Communications Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, stated on 15 November 1941: "three large workshops have been handed over for war supplies and a considerable amount of the capacity in others was turned over to meeting the demands of the armed forces, over 13,000 men in railway workshops are working on munitions... Railway tracks have been sent overseas or taken to meet defence demands within India...for far-flung lines of defence about 200 locomotives and over 10,000 other vehicles with ancillary equipment have been handed over."

to hoard for speculative profits and leave the masses to face severe miseries they will be doing an unwise and improper act because they may have to part with the grain even without any price. Therefore for their own good and for the good of the masses, they should not hoard any stock, and should go on selling it at reasonable rates. But even this alone will not suffice, I know.

As a matter of fact we should concentrate fully on cottage and village industries. Big industry alone cannot satisfy our needs. Factory goods are transported by railways which are gradually decreasing. Moreover, in times of war, it has been proved that big factories can be destroyed by bombs, and it requires a long time and a heavy expenditure to rebuild them. In China, when big factories were destroyed, the Chinese had to concentrate with great vigour on village and cottage industries not because Mahatma Gandhi had laid down this principle. It was not their principle. But they were forced to adopt it because of the exigencies of the war.

Noise has started again. Please sit down! Just think that disturbance has been caused because of a clash among the Indians themselves. This is our attitude. Can we still hope to become soldiers? We simply indulge in the empty talk that our organisation is gaining strength. A gathering of thirty thousand people constitutes a great force, yet twenty persons can create a disturbance! But if we have got the power to stop them and if we stick to our work they will not have the courage to create any disturbance.

The condition of our educated boys and girls is peculiar. They have cultivated a hobby of securing autographs in small notebooks. Whenever I go to some place for any work a number of autograph books are placed before me, and they shout 'first on my book, please'. I do not have ten or twelve hands so as to sign simultaneously on all the books. I do not mind giving my autograph but people should come at proper time and at leisure. They do not care to see what I am doing, whether I am attending a meeting or talking to some person. At all times books are thrust before my nose or eyes. It is not a question of giving or not giving the autograph, it is the question of our boys and girls learning discipline. Everybody wants his book to be signed first, so as to have a special relation with me and to do him a special favour. This is wrong. If you develop this habit in other matters of your life, you will not be able to work in cooperation, and there will always be indiscipline.

Similarly, you go to a railway booking office to purchase tickets. In other countries people stand in a queue behind one another and get the tickets one by one. In this manner everyone gets his ticket and no one is delayed. But what happens here is that everybody stands at the

window and begins to push others and wants to get in and procure a ticket first, no matter whether the person who came first got it or not. Everyone is anxious to get a ticket for himself only. Thus in fact instead of getting the ticket earlier everyone is delayed. These are not trifles for they count. If an organisation does not possess these qualities, it cannot be a strong one and we cannot achieve anything. If an enemy bomber drops a bomb at this meeting what will you do? Think beforehand. We might be called upon to face it. If a bomb is dropped at the meeting it is possible that it might kill ten or twenty persons. You may get panicky and yourself kill some two to four hundred persons in a stampede. To become panicky shows your weakness and amounts to inviting the enemy to come and put an end to you. You have to learn and educate others that nothing should perturb them under any circumstances. If by chance such a situation does arise you should be prepared to take action. You should not be led away by the heat of the moment for that may be harmful. Especially our volunteers, who are supposed to be present on such occasions, should also understand it well. The crowd cannot be controlled by running up and down. This work cannot be done by shouting under the pretext of management. On such occasions, directions should not be given by words but by signals and if the signals also do not serve the purpose, one should remain quiet.

Thus at present the most important work before us is to strengthen our organisation and extend it to villages in such a manner that whatever may happen, bombs may fall or food or water supplies may be stopped, or thieves or dacoits may come, or there may be dissensions or riots, we should be able to control the situation and put up a strong resistance.

How can the Congress organisation be extended to villages? In every village, in every *mohalla* or part thereof, in every city there should be at least one responsible person who should be in a position to take full charge of ten, twenty or fifty houses and be in touch with them, give them every kind of information and extend help when it is needed. We should organise ourselves in this way. There is no doubt that Congress workers in their villages are responsible for all that happens there. At the time of a local Congress organisational election everyone becomes a worker but on other occasions they do nothing. It is easy to fill up the membership form of the Congress once in a year. They do not feel any difficulty in doing so. But for the rest of the year they are not active. We do not need these idle workers any more. Now only genuine and intelligent workers are required. Today they have to do very responsible work. If they cannot fulfil their responsibilities they should leave. And if they do not leave voluntarily they will be forced to do so. We

cannot afford to have workers who are irresponsible and frivolous. Merely sitting on a big platform and doing nothing will not do any good.

We need committed and active workers in every village and city. They will be responsible for ten or twenty houses. In villages they will be responsible for their respective villages. They will have to send weekly reports about the difficulties of the people. We should enlist active volunteers in hundreds in every village and city who in times of danger should protect not only themselves but the people at large. They will not be sent outside or required to wear uniforms or badges. We will not ask them to do parades. But our only object is that they should be available in villages and cities to render whatever service they can with public cooperation. We want to form such an organisation, and if we succeed in doing so in every district and every village of the Province, we shall be able to face any crisis. Whatever the atrocities, whatever disturbances may take place, whatever else may happen, we can very well stop them through these volunteers.

Through this organisation we have also to propagate the constructive programme of the Congress. You must have heard a great deal about this constructive programme. It is to develop cottage and village industries. But at present you have to look at these questions from the point of view of the war. You have heard what I have just said in this connection. The importance of it has considerably increased. You will not get food and clothes if you do not develop cottage and village industries. These have become a necessity. People in towns may not be able to carry out this work fully, but you should do it as far as possible. You have also to purchase village products so that village industries can develop. As the import of foreign goods is slowly decreasing their substitutes should be manufactured here. Also, you should not get alarmed in any circumstances. Big questions are confronting us and the world. It will be cowardice to escape them. It will produce no result.

I want to place before you one or two points more. One of them is connected with this war. From the very beginning it has been our policy that we are not in favour of Nazism or fascism. Since long before the outbreak of the present war we have been against them. You might be aware that a little before the outbreak of the war I had gone to China to convey a message of sympathy from India to the Government and the people of China and we had also protested against the Japanese aggression in China. We have had a consistent foreign policy for years and we made it clear in the course of a statement at the outbreak of the war. You are all aware of these and I do not want to repeat them. As far as the question of giving help in this war is concerned, we cannot coöperate because we do not want to participate in this war

in the capacity of slaves. We said, give us freedom first and then we will consider the question. But they turned a deaf ear to it. In the end we started satyagraha movement and courted arrest. The British on the other hand want to keep us like slaves and do not want to make any change in our status. In view of this our former decision is further justified.

Now the question is what has led to the decision taken at Bardoli and Wardha? Some people have misunderstood it. I would like to explain that although the satyagraha has been suspended, the reason for its suspension has no connection with the Government. We have not suspended it to please or displease the Government. Its reason is quite different. But our attitude towards the war is the same as per our decision at Bombay. There has been no change in it. In Wardha and Bardoli also our policy remained the same. No one should have any misunderstanding about it. However, it is right to consider what should be our future course of action in view of the fact that the war is coming nearer to India. But as the war is approaching our borders, should we therefore accept slavery of the British, join the army, work for recruitment and collect money from the poor in order to spend it uselessly on fat salaries? This is nonsense. We will not bow our heads before the British rule, we will not cooperate and we will not march along with the British on the frontiers of India or anywhere else.

A big revolution is taking place all over the world, and India too cannot escape from it. We can consider the question of coming to some settlement with the British Government. We are prepared to consider proposals for this. There has never been any restriction in politics to consider any matter. The door of negotiations is always open. It is never closed. I do not want a drastic change in the world or a change of government in Britain. We do not want all this. But as slaves we cannot consider any proposal for compromise. But the position changes if we are to negotiate as a free nation. In free India it would be the public which will decide whether we have to come to a settlement with the British Government or not. But it is impossible to have any settlement with them at present. The Indian public and particularly the Congress can never approve of this. India can never forget the treatment meted out to her and the Congress. The British might well think that by doing so we have acted cunningly. The attempt which has been made to create differences among us, the various obstacles which have been put in our way, might hamper us to some extent. But it is impossible that they would worry us much. We will not climb the mountain that they have raised between themselves and us, they might come to us by crossing it, if they like to do so.

Our policy in connection with the war has not changed. It cannot change because we cannot do anything else but resist the British enslavement. I cannot say what will be the result of this war. Whatever the result may be, we will look to our own organisation and depend on our own courage rather than spread our hands before anybody. If we are organised, we need not fear and if we lack organisation and courage, we will ever remain fallen and slaves of others.

It is being said that Japan and Germany would come. This is what some people say. Their minds are obsessed with slavery. They think of all this but do not think that whosoever is against our freedom we shall fully oppose him. Why should I doubt that we will not be able to face him successfully? I ask you, what you and I would do, if per chance, besides the British, the armies of other countries like Japan or Germany come to India? I tell you and I am confident as to what the Congress would do. We might not be able to put up armed resistance but we will never bow our heads before them and the Congress will resist them in the sense that it will not accept their rule. Also remember that martial law comes along with invading armies. Martial law does not mean that you offer satyagraha and get imprisonment for six months or a year. Martial law means that a man is court-martialled even for disobeying ordinary orders. Order is given to shoot him down. I presume that Congressmen will be prepared even for this. But we will never bow our heads before any foreign army or government. Our struggle is not against any country. Our sympathies are with China and Russia, although we may or may not agree with all their principles. I will be very sorry if Russia or China is defeated.

All these things are there but what course is to be adopted by the whole country and how can we raise our voice for the freedom of the world? But neither can we tread the path of helping the Government in the capacity of slaves nor are we prepared to do so under threats or coercion. This can never be.

In the end I will tell you that the time is gone when the settlement could be made with this party or that. Now India will be free and only then these things will be considered. The only work, at present before us, is that we should very quickly organise ourselves in villages. Many important things have been told to you in this connection and many more will be conveyed to you. You should enlist volunteers and establish their organisations in every village and *mohalla* not only with a view to opposing the Government or offering satyagraha, but to end the disputes in the villages and to face the difficulties of the war. You should carry on the constructive programme. These are the works, which should be done not only by the Congress workers but by every

individual in the country, as everybody can do them. Boys, students all can do them. We are engaged in the preparation of a big task. By accomplishing it we would increase our strength, strengthen our organisation and when the time for doing great work comes, we would find ourselves quite equal to the occasion.

We are in the middle of an ocean and whether we want it or not, we have to go across. Now if we have strength in our arms we can swim across and if we do not have strength in our arms, we will be drowned then and there.

30. To C. Rajagopalachari¹

Allahabad
January 26, 1942

My dear Rajaji,

I have been reading the reports of your speeches given in the newspapers.² Some parts of these have distressed me. You have no doubt every right to express your own opinion. But I do think that the emphasis you give to certain aspects and the general approach is not in keeping with the opinion of the great majority in the A.I.C.C. or even the Working Committee. Consequently many people here are rather upset at some of the reports of your speeches. It is unbecoming for me or any other member of the Working Committee to enter into a public argument with you. Yet even avoiding that, it is inevitable that what we say should not fit in with what you say.

I should like to make it clear that I am not challenging your right to say what you have said. But a continuous approach to the British

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In a statement on 21 January 1942, Rajagopalachari stated that the entry of Japan and Russia into the war had made it morally more easy for the Congress to offer its cooperation, and had also made the transfer of full control and the declaration of India's status more urgently necessary. In a speech on the next day he asserted that people could defend their country effectively only "when patriotism or love of motherland was completely equated with defence. It was only if the deadlock was quickly solved, that we would have efficient defence for this country; otherwise it would be only a question of marking time."

Government, even though this might be subject to the conditions laid down by the Congress, makes people think that behind all our resolutions there is a more definite invitation to the British Government and that something in the nature of a compromise is being worked out. This approach again leads people to the conclusion that some arrangement will be arrived at. They do not therefore worry themselves about the organisational or the constructive programme of the Congress; nor do they think much about developing their own strength to face the crisis ahead. A feeling of doubt and uncertainty fills the minds of people making them incapable of effective action.

You told me that whatever your wishes were in the matter, you see no chance whatever of any compromise between the British Government and Indian nationalism. If that is so, and I agree with you entirely that it is so, then there is no point in emphasizing the desirability of such compromise which can only lead people's minds astray. For my part, I think it is much too late for any real compromise to take place, for the very minimum conditions on our part are far beyond what the British Government might do. I think there can be nothing more dangerous than our being saddled with responsibility without complete power. Complete power is inconceivable in the present and partial power will make our position worse.

Your references to the Muslim League³ more or less on same terms as the Congress also seem to me to be unhappy. This gives a fillip to the dwindling fortunes of the League and irritates large numbers of Congressmen and others.

I have ventured to write to you frankly because I know you will appreciate frankness on my part. I have also of course only hinted at what I had in my mind but you will understand.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. In his interview to the Associated Press on 2 January 1942, Rajagopalachari claimed that all shades of opinion welcomed the Bardoli resolution. Even the Muslim League was ready to participate in the war effort if it shared power in the Centre and provinces with other parties within the present constitution but "without prejudice to the major political issues involved in the framing of the future constitution. That is their precise constitutional language, that it expresses the same thing as what Congress has asked times without number." The Muslim demand could not therefore be cited as an "excuse for what really waits for solution by British courage and willingness."

31. Resistance to All Aggression¹

You have assembled here today for a set purpose. We are here to reiterate our Independence pledge which will be placed before you shortly. The Independence Day is being celebrated every year since 1930 and we are observing it today for the thirteenth time. During this period of thirteen years the Congress launched satyagraha agitations against the British Government several times. Many of our comrades were arrested and imprisoned. The Congress was declared an unlawful organisation and meetings were banned. But notwithstanding Government opposition and lathi charges there has not been a single break in the annual celebrations of the Independence Day. This year also it is but proper, rather necessary, to celebrate it. In view of the present-day conditions in the world we must keep our minds clear and our bodies prepared for all eventualities. Who knows a calamity may overtake India, for a new drama is being enacted on the world stage. Although the storm is not sweeping over India at present, conditions are rapidly changing here also and we are fast approaching a world of momentous changes.

It is evident that the great power which has been ruling over us for such a long time is nearing its end not because of our strength but owing to its own weakness. The main problem which faces us today is that of development of our own strength. We have to think how we can defend our country at this juncture. You must have read in the papers that there was a lively discussion over this matter. About two or three weeks ago when Congressmen were released from jails it was discussed what the Congress should do and what it should not do. The Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli and subsequently the All India Congress Committee met at Wardha and took important decisions. Some Indian and foreign papers have sought to create a misunderstanding about those decisions. Such discussions as took place recently among us are by no means unusual on occasions like the present one but there has been no fundamental change in our outlook. It was made clear at Bardoli that the Congress stand which was taken at Bombay still held the field. This was further clarified at Wardha. Some men mistakenly took into their heads that Mahatma Gandhi had dissociated

1. Speech at Purushottam Das Park, Allahabad, 26 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

himself from the Congress. But he demonstrated that they were labouring under a delusion. It is, of course, true that there have been differences of opinion at times but the Congress has demonstrated its strength at the present occasion. We can never forget the lesson we have learnt under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, that in spite of all difficulties and even differences of opinion we must keep step with our comrades in troublesome times. If we fail to do this we shall lose our strength and shall not be able to face the Great War which is going on in the world. Phenomenal changes are taking place behind the curtain of the war, big empires are crumbling and a new world is being created before our very eyes. It is difficult to say whether or not that new world will be a blessing for us.

I shall now draw your attention to the point on which the Congress has laid great emphasis and which is linked with the Independence Day. The question is asked whether at Bardoli or Wardha we opened our doors for cooperation with the British Government. The question has been discussed in the press from various viewpoints. Evidently the doors of India have always been kept open. We do not want to close the doors of our heads and hearts. This is true theoretically and its practical application was the Bardoli resolution which was ratified at Wardha. A year and a half ago we declared in unambiguous terms that we cannot cooperate with the British Government under the present circumstances. Their attitude and our experience during these one and a half years as also the day-to-day incidents have vindicated our stand. Their attitude towards India, her people and her freedom did not undergo the slightest change, no matter what calamities befell them. They are beset with a thousand calamities and they are fighting for their country and freedom. It would not be unjustified if we entered into a fair agreement with them, but it is bad to sympathise with them or to show more sympathy to them than they are showing us. We have always sympathised with countries like China and Russia where systems which we like to a great extent have been evolved. But those countries stand at a different footing and we may or may not sympathise with them. But what should be our relations with the British Government?

As far as this question is concerned you should not have the least doubt in your mind with regard to the Congress policy; it is the same as it was one and a half years before. In fact the time has almost passed when the Congress could adopt a sympathetic attitude. If the British Government had shown prudence and foresight, it should have taken a step forward and accepted India's freedom and given us freedom, then we would have sympathised with the British and thrown our weight on their side. But under the existing circumstances it is futile for them to

try to secure our cooperation and help in the prosecution of the war. Indeed they have closed the door to such cooperation. Their policy has precluded the possibility of our helping them in the war even if we wished. Our policy is different. We have neither equipment nor the necessary preparation, we did not voluntarily join the war, but if we are compelled to help in the prosecution of the war, you must bear in mind that the Congress policy has not undergone any change in connection with the war. Indeed we want, as we have often said, that the British Government should leave India giving her complete freedom. Under the present-day conditions, however, it seems ridiculous to think that we shall act at Britain's dictation. British prestige is on the wane and it is meaningless to think that we shall take our cue from Britain.

Now the question is what is the measure of a country's power? Nowadays the power of countries is measured by the number of aeroplanes and tanks they possess and it is futile to deny that these represent their strength. But we in India neither possess these war materials, nor can we manufacture them. What are we to do then? We might at a future date be able to possess them but that is a different question. At present we have no armaments. You know that for the last twenty years we have been trying to develop another kind of power by the help of which we have so far opposed a powerful Government. It is no mean power though it cannot be measured in terms of aeroplanes and tanks. Mahatmajī thought it most suitable in every respect and put it up before the country. Many people welcomed it, for they had no other choice. We have, during the last two decades, seen the strength and weakness of that weapon of nonviolence. It should, perhaps, be wrong to use the word "weakness" because it is due to our own inability to wield it properly that we call it "weak". In spite of our shortcomings, we have in the past years achieved remarkable results and our country and people have shown their mettle. You must be remembering the events that took place in our country during the last one and a half centuries. Such events are likely to weaken any nation. Particularly our masses, the workers and peasants, are very backward and our foremost duty is to educate them and to create in them the power of opposition. I think what has been happening in India during the past twenty years will appreciably influence the future history of the world, and other nations too will follow the same path. Anyway, I do not want to debate on this controversy of violence and nonviolence. What I want to tell you is that the means we have devised for developing strength and the power of opposition in us, is not easy to comprehend. We do not understand how we can resist enemy troops when they attack us. How can we defend ourselves when bombs are showered on us from aeroplanes? But in spite of all this I can assure you that a nation which

is organised and which refuses to bow down its head, can never lose its freedom.

The British Government has been ruling over us for a century and a half and it has firmly established itself here in the course of this long period. From the *patwari* to the Viceroy there is a hierarchy and it is extremely difficult for us to remove it now, as it has been in existence since the time of our great-grandfathers. The other thing which is clinging to our minds is however not hard to be dislodged. The fact that we oppose the British Government does not mean that we shall allow another alien power to venture to come to our country and rule over us. Many chicken-hearted people who have all these days lived in slavery ask us whether the Japanese or Germans will come to replace the British. This is an absurd question. I do not know who will come and who will not come but so far as we are concerned it is our primary duty to oppose anyone who might seek to enslave India. A hero cannot be compelled to bow down his head, of course he can be deprived of his life. Such brave men cannot be found in large numbers in any country but they do exist in a small minority and it is they who change the atmosphere of their country.

Now the question is how we can develop our strength? We must strengthen our organisation and carry its message from one end of the country to another. We must serve the village people and reform their conditions. This work of service should be carried on in urban areas also but particularly in rural areas, for India is primarily an agricultural country. Notwithstanding Britain's hold on India for the last one hundred and fifty years, it is possible that coming events may render the British Government too weak to rule over the whole of India. Even if it succeeds in carrying on its administration in the big cities it may not be able to control the rural areas.

What shall we do then? Of course we cannot be idle spectators of the loot and disorder which might take place. We must maintain such a strong organisation that we may prevent any disorder and render help to the masses. We want to render help in such a way that there may be no occasion for us to fall out with anyone. It is of the utmost importance that we should take up this work with the wholehearted cooperation of the masses, for public cooperation is indispensable for the success of the Congress programme. By cooperation I do not mean that you may attend a meeting or join a procession for a short while; I want you to take up responsible duties. You should be responsible for the maintenance of peace in the locality you live in. If there are ten houses in your neighbourhood, you should shoulder the responsibility of maintaining peace in those ten houses by keeping contact with them. We

should set afoot our preparations for this just now, otherwise we shall be able to do nothing when the occasion arises, say, after six months.

You know that the question of A.R.P. has cropped up everywhere. In several cities, we have noticed that many trenches have been dug. We have not yet considered it essential for ourselves to dig trenches in our houses nor do we intend to do so. We do not expect that aeroplanes will suddenly come to drop bombs at present though it is not an impossibility. I do not think that any foreign army shall come to India except those forces which have been here since long. It is just possible that we may have air raids on Indian cities like Calcutta in Bengal. Like Rangoon, India might also suffer. If it is destined to happen like that, let it happen. We should not be panicky on that account. Many cities in the world have been suffering since long from these raids. We will also suffer and even may lose our lives. If we are nervous, it will add to our difficulties instead of decreasing them. This lesson is very essential during the war.

Those nations which do not lose heart and face their enemies with perseverance and coolmindedness, only they go ahead. The first lesson which I would like to learn today is that of coolmindedness. The second lesson is that of organisation and of feeling its responsibility. I would like the members of the Congress committees, whether they are in villages or in cities, to leave the Congress if they think that their duty is only to attend meetings. I want sincere workers. They need not be of the type of volunteers in uniform we see today. Such things are for peaceful times. We want them for the defence of *mohallas* at this juncture. We want the cooperation of all in this connection and even non-Congressmen are welcome in this effort. But all of them shall have to be under Congress discipline.

You have to bear in your minds one thing more. The transport of goods will become more difficult as the war progresses. Many rails will be dismantled and sent away as the railway is engaged for military purposes, thus making it impossible to bring goods to Allahabad from other places. We shall not be able to get many articles in villages which we see today. Prices shall rise. Even today the prices of essential commodities have increased. I would like to remind you of the Congress resolution so far as the prices of foodstuffs are concerned.² We

2. The U.P.P.C.C. resolution of 10 January 1942 stated that "villagers should endeavour to grow food crops to cover the needs of the village and grain dealers should not hold up stocks for profit but should release them for consumption at fair prices." An attempt towards self-sufficiency in food, clothing and other necessities of life should be made by encouraging village industries and organising cooperatives for the distribution of their products.

have to consider two points in this connection. If the traders of food-stuffs increase the rate in anticipation of profits, they are likely to lose more. You see what is happening in Madras Presidency. It is just possible that they may have to part with their stuff without any payment. Gandhiji has made it clear in today's paper that traders should sell at reasonable rates with minimum of profits.³ The second point is that four or five villages should cooperate and produce food commodities by joint efforts. You know that villagers produce several crops which are cash crops in the hope of selling them in the markets on high prices. They should now produce only food articles for themselves and the neighbouring towns so that they may not starve if outside supply is withheld on any account.

Cloth too is becoming scarce day by day. We need it more during these days of war. As I have told you about the cottage industries of China, we shall have to do the same thing in India. People of cities can undertake these by individual, joint and cooperative efforts. Farming has become a necessity. It should be on such a large scale that we may become self-sufficient. We can also develop other cottage industries. We may purchase petty articles of necessity from the markets. An exhibition of products manufactured by the Rural Development Association of the U.P. Government is being held these days at the Bund here.⁴ Most of the work you see in the exhibition was started during the regime of the Congress government. It has developed all the more on account of the war. There are many other items which we are trying to develop but which we cannot show in exhibitions. Today only ten or twenty thousand people are engaged in these industries, but I would like the number to increase to twenty lakhs. Every person should make it a point to purchase these articles as far as possible.

You have come here for taking a pledge, hence it is more essential for you to wear khadi, ply the charkha, strive for communal unity and the eradication of untouchability. These principles laid down by Gandhiji are being followed by Indians to a great extent but their importance has still to be realised. As the world changes, their importance is coming to light. If we leave even one of them, we become weak. We must discard untouchability. We can increase our wealth by joint effort. Nothing can be done during these days of war except rural development.

3. He wrote in *Harijan* of 25 January 1942, "Dealers should shed their greed and the habit of making as much profit as possible. They must be satisfied with as little as possible. They run the risk of being looted, if they do not gain the credit of being keepers of grain for the sake of the poor".

4. Held on the grounds of the Allahabad Agricultural Association on the occasion of the *Kumbh Mela* from 13-28 January 1942.

Other things cannot be carried on at such a speed, nor can new factories be opened. A factory built with a capital of ten to twenty lakhs may be destroyed by an aeroplane. Hence you should now realize the importance of what Mahatmaji has been saying and you should make a determined effort to follow it. What arrangements are you going to make for yourselves? None can check the march of time. Self-reliant men can carry on their work smoothly if they remain cool-headed. In case we become nervous and perplexed we can do nothing.

Now I am going to read out the pledge of Independence. You will remember that it is to be repeated by all of you. First of all I will read it aloud in full as usual and after that I would like you, or those of you who care, to repeat it. This repetition is not for show; you need not repeat it if you have no inclination to act accordingly. I hope that many of you would do it sincerely. However I do not wish that you should deceive yourself or your neighbours in case you are not prepared to act as instructed therein. First of all I will read it, and then I would request only those who accept it to repeat it.

32. To Bhagwan Singh Gimdi¹

Allahabad
January 29, 1942

Dear Sardar Sahib,²

Over a year ago, before I went to prison on that last occasion, I learnt that efforts were being made by the Education Department of the United Provinces to raise money for the war funds through sport firms.³ These sport firms were asked to give a special discount of 3% on all purchases made by or on behalf of schools and colleges so that this discount may be handed over to the war funds. This struck me as reprehensible practice as it brought undue pressure on the school and college authorities as well as on the sport firms to contribute to the war fund, whether they wanted to or not. Inevitably this suggestion was in the nature of a directive which had to be followed. I think I said something at the time criticising this action of the educational authorities.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Proprietor of D.J. Love and Co., Sport Manufacturers. Allahabad; well wisher of the Congress.

3. The Inspector of Schools of Allahabad, in his circular of 12 August 1940 to all the heads of the public institutions in Allahabad, had quoted the resolution passed by the Inter School and College Athletic League requesting the sport firms dealing with them to donate 3% of their income to the war fund.

I have now seen some papers which confirm my previous fears and show how this undue pressure has been exercised and school and college authorities have been compelled to purchase their athletic goods from firms agreeing to give this discount in aid of the war fund. Any firm not agreeing to do this is boycotted and victimised. While it is open to any individual or firm to contribute to the war fund, if it so chooses, it is certainly unfair and improper to bring this pressure, which is tantamount to coercion. Your firm, I understand, has expressed its unwillingness to contribute to the war fund in this way and you have adhered to your principle in spite of the great loss involved to your firm. I am sorry for the loss caused to you but at the same time I congratulate you on your adherence to principle and to the national policy. I am sure this knowledge will give you strength.

I think it is the duty of all those who can do so, more especially individuals and private educational institutions and students' organisations, to make a point of patronising your firm and buying their athletic goods from you so as to counter, as far as possible, this victimisation on the part of the educational authorities. This does not mean that they should get inferior value goods from you. Given equal facilities and value, they should undoubtedly prefer dealing with you than with such firms as have succumbed to the pressure of the educational authorities. I hope, therefore, that your firm will receive this patronage from all national-minded individuals. I wish you success in your undertaking.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

33. To Ethelind Higginbottom¹

Allahabad
January 29, 1942

Dear Mrs. Higginbottom,²

I have received your letter of the 28th January.³ It is true that some students from the Agricultural Institute came to me two days ago and

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Ethelind Higginbottom actively helped her husband Sam Higginbottom in setting up and running the Agricultural Institute at Allahabad from 1913-1945 and introduced Home Science as a subject in 1936.

3. She wrote that her husband "prefers that political issues should not disturb our educational aim" and stated that flag hoisting on Independence Day was done in an undisciplined manner without consulting the principal or the staff.

informed me of certain incidents regarding the putting up of the national flag on Independence Day. There was no occasion for me to give them any advice in the matter as they had acted according to the decision of their own Union, and, in any event, the incident was more or less over.

I quite agree with you that in any educational institution there should be discipline and cooperation between the authorities of that institution and the students. I have often emphasized the need for such discipline and cooperation. In the particular matter to which you refer there seems to me that nothing very extraordinary took place. In most of the educational institutions of Allahabad, including the University Union and Ewing Christian College, the national flag was hoisted on Independence Day in accordance with the usual practice. No objection was taken and in many instances the professors themselves took part in the ceremony. I do not know why any difficulty should have arisen in the Agricultural Institute. It is a well-known fact that hoisting of the national flag takes place specially on Independence Day. So far as the national flag is concerned it does not represent a party or a faction but various groups and political shades of opinion, all of whom look upon it as a symbol of India's freedom. It has come to mean for us what the American flag means to Americans, and any disrespect shown to it is naturally resented. I should like you to imagine what the reaction of American students would be if any disrespect was shown to the American flag. Indeed I have been reading in American newspapers and magazines about a widespread campaign in America centering round the display of the stars and stripes, which rightly has become the symbol of American nationhood.

The Agricultural Institute is, as you say, an American institution. But it is functioning in India and presumably it is meant for the benefit of India and Indian students, otherwise it would have little place here. Any such institution, therefore, must keep in view the deeply cherished sentiments of the people it seeks to serve. I am glad to find that the Ewing Christian College, which is also an American institution, pays due regard to these sentiments and many of the professors there show their goodwill to the students by participating in their activities.

Some students who visited me informed me that Dr. Higginbottom is so bitterly opposed to Indian nationalist policy that he criticises it in strong language even in the midst of his lectures. He is of course free to express his opinions at any time or place but this repeated criticism addressed to students who do not agree with him and cannot enter into a debate with him, can only lead to friction and ill will. I do not know that it is the function of an American institution to run counter to the nationalistic sentiments and urge to freedom of the students.

I am exceedingly busy and am frequently away from Allahabad. I have to shoulder heavy responsibilities and avoid engagements of the nature you suggest. Even otherwise I do not think it would serve any useful purpose for me to address your students. That is a matter between them and the authorities of the Institute. Of course, if Dr. Higginbottom desires to see me, I shall try to find some time for him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

34. The War and the People¹

After about a year I am speaking again here at Gorakhpur. After my release from jail I started touring the villages and I have come to Gorakhpur also. I did not plan to come here but I received a message from your district about the conditions of the tenants who cultivate sugarcane. Their problem is connected with the important question of the payment of rent and is therefore a difficult one.

Great changes have taken place in this world and are still taking place. The war has spread far and wide and has reached the borders of India. During the individual satyagraha many people courted arrest. Many others also would have gone to jails if Mahatmaji had permitted. He had imposed restrictions and allowed only selected individuals but even so twenty-five thousand persons were imprisoned. How did these events affect you? What are the events which are taking place at the present time?

As you know I was sentenced to four-year imprisonment for touring this city of Gorakhpur and for having delivered two or three speeches in this district.² I do not actually remember at this moment what I said in those speeches but I said something against the British Government or something in connection with this war. Before this, I was never sentenced for more than two years. But perhaps the authorities thought that my importance had increased and so I should be awarded imprisonment for a longer term. The District Magistrate³ sentenced

1. Public speech at D.A.V. High School, Gorakhpur, 31 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 485.

3. F.V. Moss, I.C.S., was the District Magistrate of Gorakhpur; after 1947 he served in Pakistan.

me to four years' imprisonment, for which I offered my formal thanks. In reality I did not thank him for awarding me imprisonment for a longer period, but I liked the sentence the very moment it was awarded. It does not at all matter for what term imprisonment is awarded. I do not see any difference in being sentenced for a long term or for a short term, because after my release I can again talk about the same things and can again be sentenced for them. Imprisonment does not matter for there are other things also to be considered. Even at that time I had the doubt whether the British Government would survive in this country for four years. I was not, therefore, particularly affected in any way. I thought that my sentence would have a good effect on my comrades and other people, both in and outside India, and it did, in fact, have a good effect. It is a matter of pity for the person who sentenced me, that in spite of his awarding me imprisonment for four years my convictions have not yet changed. Neither did the sentence have any effect on me nor have the events taken a different course. I have come to Gorakhpur today to inform him that I am prepared to repeat the same words which I uttered at that time, that I am uttering those words even now, and would continue to utter them in future also. It is strange that many people were sentenced for publishing the short statement⁴ which I had read out before the District Magistrate and also for reading or even for keeping it in their houses. It is strange that even after my release people were sentenced for keeping that statement. I, who am the person who gave that statement, wrote it and had read it out, am before you. That statement was mild enough but I consider it my duty to say and use even stronger words. Though there are many questions before us, as far as the British Government is concerned it is the duty of every individual in this country to oppose it and revolt against it. This is a straightforward statement. I wish that the District Magistrate notes it down that it is my duty and creed to revolt against the British rule. He should have no difficulty in taking any action against me and sentence me to jail or take any other action which he considers suitable. I also feel greatly relieved after conveying this message to him.

Mahatmaji issued a statement in which he told us that it was the duty of every Indian to revolt against such a Government⁵ and he also

4. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 485-490.

5. Mahatma Gandhi, on 25 April 1941, stated, "It is the duty of every Indian who knows anything about the distress of the peasantry to rise in rebellion against this autocratic rule. Fortunately for humanity, India's rebellion is a peaceful revolt and, I hope, it will be through exclusively peaceful effort that India will realise her national destiny."

told us in what manner and in what spirit it should be done. There are several questions before us to resolve, but the duty of every Indian is that he should not bow down to this Government. If anyone has any doubt about this, he should say so. For the last two years, or a year and a half, you have seen that in spite of the fact that a great war is raging and the British Government is facing many difficulties, its attitude towards our country continues to be one of arrogance, insolence and impertinence as before.

Leave India out of consideration for a moment. It is a vast country. Take your district alone. I feel surprised at what the British officials here think of themselves. What else can be said about the acts they have done except that the death of this Government is writ large on their very foreheads and that they are digging their own graves. What all of them are doing is before you. At the same time you should tell them that their great imperialism, of which you were frightened, is being liquidated before the eyes of the whole world. It would not perhaps be wrong to say that their imperialism or any other imperialism in this world will not survive any longer. There can be no doubt whatsoever about one thing that whatever may happen in future, it is certain that the British Government will not survive in India.

It is possible that like others you also may be thinking about the question of German or Japanese rule. Those who entertain this idea are perhaps deeply rooted in the notion of slavery. They are incapable of thinking that India can ever be free. At a time when big countries are being subjugated and big imperialistic powers are being exterminated, it would be futile for me to indulge in long and big talks. Nobody can say who will fall or who will survive and what would be their fate. We say that our people have courage, strength and unity and we can face big dangers. I know that so far as the future is concerned anybody can say that the British rule here will not last very long. But we should assure that if a calamity befalls our country and some other foreign power tries to conquer it we shall continue to fight for freedom. We have been fighting with determination to win Swaraj and have repeated the pledge of Independence. Have we done all this only to make ourselves slaves of some other power instead of the British? This is quite impossible and we cannot agree to this. So far as the Congress policy is concerned if any foreign power ever tries to come to India, we shall not bow down our heads to it. We will have to put up a strong resistance.

Today I notice that British imperialism is disappearing from here. Its real power is coming to an end before our very eyes and it would in fact disappear. The question today is not how to resist the British Government but how to organize our country on the eve of the coming

revolution. Such important matters are engaging my attention. The question that India has to decide is, how to administer the country after this imperialism has come to an end? I am therefore not very keen about organised assistance to the British Government or whether or not we should offer satyagraha. But the British Government continues to take steps which makes it necessary for us to resist it and this has to continue. It is not important at the moment to root the British out from here, because they are themselves cutting their own roots with axes. You are aware of the conditions prevailing in this country and the British attitude towards India, the policy pursued by them so far, and the doings of their officials in the course of these two years. In spite of all this we repeatedly offered them, on behalf of the Congress, to come to an amicable settlement and grant independence to India. But they have suppressed our demands. This imperialism is in a dilemma and is reduced to such a state that the British cannot protect their own imperialism.

You know that their Empire was not organised before the outbreak of the war. They are not strong enough to guard it and save it. They say that their Empire is spread out far and wide. They cannot manage to send troops everywhere to save themselves. The fact is that the time for big empires is over. It is possible for a big imperialistic power to flourish but that imperialism shall not be of the type of British imperialism. The first thing is that no power can be so organized and strong in future as the British had been for the last 150 years. They had supremacy over the seas. They had economic strength. But no power has ruled forever nor can the British. Their old power is now on the decline. What monetary resources they had, they have like other countries exhausted them on the war. That type of imperialism therefore cannot function.

If the British win the war it will be because of China and Russia and not because of their own strength. After the war they will not have the strength to stand on their own legs or be able to maintain any position in the world. The world is moving very fast. Either under America or Europe a world order would be established which would include Britain, Russia, China and a free India. This would be a proper order. In these circumstances what should we do at this moment? This is the real question which we should consider.

The first thing is that we should not be distracted and feel worried because worry and distraction are signs of weakness. Whatever strength one has is thus lost. You have seen that big countries like France have fallen before our eyes. You have also seen that countries of Asia—big or small—and Islamic countries like Iran and Iraq have lost their independence. British domination has been established there. The people of

these countries are not in any way free. The question of our independence is no more in the forefront. There is no question of achieving and maintaining it. The first thing is that we should not feel upset and worried in any way in the present circumstances and should as far as possible try to stop our mutual bickerings. Such things are useless. I am amazed at the newspaper reports about the acts of some persons who indulge in old-fashioned communal matters. You are aware of the Muslim League resolution on Pakistan,⁶ that India should be split up into Muslim India and Hindu India, for which a propaganda has been going on for the last one year and a half. Nobody thinks what is happening today in the world. There were Islamic states, Iraq and Iran, which were independent but have fallen before our eyes. They were free Islamic countries. People may talk of dividing India into two or three parts and may call one of them as Pakistan. If, what I consider to be impossible, does perchance happen the Muslim League would feel jubilant over it but I wish my eyes and ears were closed when one talked of this. I do not want to see the day when absurd idealism may become possible. No small country can exist in the present-day world. Hitler has destroyed all the small countries of Europe. The small countries of Asia are also gradually being swept out of existence. It means that if these countries are to live in future they must live together.

England, the country of the British people, has been strong only for the last two hundred years. It is now my firm belief that it cannot retain its existence independently. It can only live in union with America and other small nations of Europe. It has no strength now to face any country all by itself. Countries which were once large are now becoming small. Big countries by entering into alliances with each other are forming still greater units which no power on this earth can equal. Even Germany, which is considered to be the strongest power today and possesses the strongest air force in the world, can hardly dare face the whole world if the latter turns against her. Neither Japan nor England nor any other country can stand alone against the whole world.

Under these circumstances it is nothing but foolish on the part of the people who think of dividing India. We shall grow weak if we quarrel among ourselves. Under slavery it does not make any difference whether India is partitioned or not, but in freedom it makes a lot of difference. It is better if it remains united rather than divided into parts. If unfortunately it is partitioned then let it be partitioned but it can in no way bear the yoke of slavery.

6. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 17.

Let us consider first that India, a big country, quite a big country in the world, after getting free from the British, will have to live in union with other countries of the world. It will enter into alliances with them, and it will form a union or a federation in which all the countries will be included. I have been of the opinion for a long time that both India and China can come close to each other. China's civilization is thousands of years old and we have been culturally united from time immemorial. Both of us are destined to live as free nations in this world, and I believe that it would be good not only for both of us but for the world at large. India shall also establish relations with Russia very soon, firstly, because it has a common frontier, and secondly, our country is faced with economic problems. There exists a great difference between us and the Russian people no doubt but despite this difference there are many common things between us. We can learn many things from them and they too can learn a lot from us. In Asia India will come in closer contact with Russia and China. This union does not mean that we shall be enemies of the rest of the world. We shall try to maintain friendly relations with other nations of the world, particularly with Britain because we are not fighting against the British people. We are only fighting British imperialism which is ruling our country. It would be better for it if it goes. In that case alone a National Government of this country will be prepared to cooperate in full with the British Government. As I believe, when all nations are free in the world they can form a common federation and then it would be a question of mutual relationships between the countries. But at present Britain is engaged in fighting with other nations. Both the parties are trying to kill and exterminate each other.

This war is strange. Millions of human beings are being slaughtered, thousands of ancient cities have been ruined, country after country is being devastated and God alone knows how long this war will drag on. I think that this war will continue for many years to come. Only two years have passed since it started. I do not see its end soon. After the close of this war the world may witness many great revolutions which will change the old world and create a new one, or lead to bloodshed which will also ultimately lead to the creation of a new world. Whatever happens the question is what have we to do? We are not far from the scene of war. It has reached Burma, the enemy can even bomb Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, thereby killing thousands of our brothers and sisters and destroying our cities like Rangoon where many were killed in air raids. Calcutta can likewise be bombarded. I am not sure of the danger of air raid to your district, Gorakhpur. But at the same time, it is wrong to suppose that it is impossible. If there are air raids

in India only big cities might suffer loss. Villages and rural districts are generally free from such attacks. Only by accident the city of Gorakhpur, being in a rural district, may become a victim of any such attack. But I do not think any large-scale invasion will be launched from either side of India. We cannot tolerate anybody entering into our country, attacking and destroying us.

First thing to consider is that, whatever happens, whether the enemy advances into our country or not, we cannot escape from the effect of war. Though this effect is not being fully realised at present still the effect is there. Prices of commodities are rising every day. The number of railway trains has been reduced. The commodities coming from outside into Gorakhpur have become scarce. British made cloth and that manufactured at Ahmedabad have become very costly. War has completely stopped the import of British made cloth and you may not get the cloth of Ahmedabad mills. Tomorrow the railway will stop transportation of cloth and the cloth dealers will have to close their shops. Even those who have means to purchase cloth will not find it. If it is at all available, it will be at an exorbitant rate. The foodstuffs brought for your consumption in trains will also stop coming and the prices of the same will shoot up. Gorakhpur district does not produce wheat but only grows sugarcane, and if no wheat comes from outside what would happen? You cannot live on sugarcane alone. What you would do I cannot understand. If war comes to India everything that I have told you is possible. To consider all these problems you must call a general meeting and must directly approach the businessmen of the city.

We do not realise that graindealers and shopkeepers are our brothers. You say that these persons hoard the grain in order to sell it in future at higher rates and earn huge profits. Let them do so. They carry on their business with a view to earning profit. They have a right to sell and make profit thereby, but why should they hoard in such a way that the people might be put to trouble? It would be foolish on their part to do so because when there would be no money, no corn, and the people would be in distress due to scarcity of corn, there cannot be a question of profit at that time. On the contrary whatever they might have would perhaps be divided without profits. Therefore it would be much better to sell it at a reasonable profit than to hoard it. The important point is that you should make your own provision according to the needs of all the people. If adequate provision for the rural areas is made, then it would be easy to provide for the cities also. There are two very essential commodities which you require now. One is food and the other clothing. These two are most essential commodities. There are other necessities also but these two are the most important. You should

yourselves make provision for the supply of food and clothing. If a few villages put together make their own provision for the supply of food and clothing then there shall be no need to get these essentials from outside. You should produce these things yourselves, and produce them in such a quantity that you may be able to supply these things to the neighbouring cities also.

Cultivators say that as they get good return from the sugarcane cultivation so they have ceased to cultivate wheat and have begun to grow sugarcane. The result of the mass sugarcane production has been that the market price of the cane has gone down and when this happened people began to raise a hue and cry.⁷ Prices are apt to rise and fall and this fluctuation will always be there. You may cultivate anything you like but you must make some provision for food. As soon as food provision is complete in one village other neighbouring villages will also follow suit and make their own provisions. After this comes the question of clothing.

We have long been preaching the cult of khadi and charkha but you paid no heed to it. It had no effect on you. If even during the war you do not try to realize the importance of it you shall be put to a good deal of trouble. You cannot get foreign cloth now and you will not be able to get even khadi from outside. It is wrong to believe that khadi can come from outside. You will be able to have only the cloth produced in your own district. You should encourage weaving among your fellow villagers. You should utilize the cotton that is produced in your surrounding villages. You should supply the weavers and *ansars* who do this work, with hand-spun thread and they will produce cloth for you. There are still millions of weavers in big places like Madras who prepare cloth from the yarn supplied by the mills and not from the yarn spun on the charkha. Now the mill-spun yarn is not available, and because of this their trade has been dislocated. I have received thousands of letters about their starvation. They do not get yarn. They cannot produce cloth. If they were used to the charkha-spun yarn and arrangements for this had been made earlier the present situation would not have arisen.

As regards other commodities you have to make arrangements for them also. There are a number of things which can be produced by cottage and village industries. I am not opposed to mill production. I want a large number of big factories and mills to be started in India. The wealth of India should increase by all possible means. We are

7. The sugarcane growers of the United Provinces were demanding a minimum price of six and a quarter annas per maund of cane, when the price assured for sugar was Rs. 9 as. 12 per maund.

poor because of heavy pressure on land which cannot maintain all of us. If some of us take to other professions, such as working in factories, starting village industries and employing ourselves in khadi production, the pressure on land will decrease to a great extent, the wealth of our country will increase and poverty will be reduced. I am not against factories. On the other hand I want more and more factories to be set up.

Two or three years ago the Congress had set up a committee named National Planning Committee and I was its Chairman.⁸ We were considering the economics of big industries and their location. But at the same time we emphasised the expansion of village and cottage industries also. Forty crores of people live in our country. With industrial expansion how many out of these forty crores can be employed in industries? At the most we can employ only two crores of people in these factories. Two crore is a big number. Still you would have thirty-eight crores left. What will these thirty-eight crores of people do? Of course they will do cultivation, but all of them cannot be absorbed in agriculture. In order to get work for them we have to start village and cottage industries in villages as well as in cities. To start with, let a small number of people begin such industries which, when developed, would subsequently absorb crores of people. Even our kisan brothers should be able to devote themselves to other occupations like charkha and other village industries.

China was a backward country but due to the war a lot of progress has been made there. In China war has been going on for the last four and a half years. Charkha was not in vogue in that country. But when the war began they were put to a lot of trouble. They were not able to get cloth. Their enemy, Japan, took possession of their factories. A number of their factories were destroyed by bombs. Due to all this China was in a helpless position. It was suicidal to buy Japanese cloth. They thought that if they purchased from Japan they would be filling their enemy's pockets. They would be aiding Japan at the risk of their own extinction. So they did not do so. Instead, they turned their attention to the development of village and cottage industries. It is only in the last four years that before our very eyes they have developed cottage industries and started cooperative societies to such an extent that today every village in China has its own industry.

During the war even if one desires to start a big factory it would be difficult because of the problem of finance. In order to start a factory you require ten to twenty lakhs of rupees. At times people invest up to

8. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 367-402.

fifty lakhs to set up a factory. If an enemy bomber hits such a factory, fifty lakhs of rupees would be wasted. If the factory comes in the possession of the enemy then he becomes richer by fifty lakhs of rupees. But if you start cottage industries there is little danger of their being destroyed by fire. In the second place you do not have to invest large amounts of money. Lastly, the enemy cannot bomb them because they are scattered all over the country. Even if the enemy takes away a few charkhas you do not lose much. If the enemy attacks a village, as has actually happened in China, the villagers with all the implements of the cottage industries, like the charkha, which is not a heavy machine, can shift to other villages. The Chinese carried on in this way. Cottage industries were started both by the poor folk living in huts as well as by the well-to-do people. Thus whether you live in a village or in a city you should think over what you have to do. The Chinese were forced to resort to cottage industries but we should take them up in order to become self-sufficient and independent of foreign supplies as far as possible.

Take for example the district of Gorakhpur. No one else can do anything for you. You have to produce goods in the land of Gorakhpur itself so that help may be given in time to the surrounding villages and also to the Azamgarh district. The greater the distance the more will be the difficulty, but in this way you will extend help even to Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Build up cottage industries and it would be better if you can start cooperative societies and encourage their products by buying them. All this you have to do, but in order to do this and other works it is essential that we should have a powerful organization. You should remember that during the time of crisis proper administration will not be possible, and law and order too will be difficult to maintain. There are a large number of people in villages and cities who take advantage of such a situation and want to loot and plunder. Let not these people plunder, we should make our own arrangements. We should not expect police protection. It does not matter whether police protects us or not, we should provide for our own safety. There should be no interference with the management of the police but we should make our own arrangements. We should strengthen our organisation so that we may be able to protect ourselves in every eventuality.

How should we protect ourselves and how should we organize ourselves? We have to organise ourselves through the district Congress committees and *mandal* Congress committees. To some extent we are already organised through these committees. But this organisation is yet small and has to be strengthened. There are many brave people in the Congress, but there should be brave persons in every village in order to approach the people. In every village there should be a person

responsible for that village who will not only go to the meetings but also establish contacts with the people of the village and meet them and organise them. At present we are enrolling volunteers not for offering satyagraha or for continuing the struggle with the British Government, but for defending our villages and cities. They do not have to go for drills and parades or go elsewhere from their villages. They live in their villages.

We get perturbed very soon. It should not be so. There is nothing to be alarmed at. You should proceed in this way. Enrol volunteers for your *mohallas*, big or small. In case of an eventuality you should serve the people and defend the *mohallas* against outside attack. We want to organise ourselves and are not anxious about the Congress earning a name. We want to serve the masses. Therefore all should be prepared for this. Whether one is a four-anna member of the Congress or not and whether one is at all a Congressman or not does not matter. The Muslim Leaguers and the Hindu Sabhaites will also perhaps like to work with us, for this is a service which everybody should do. But this work requires labour and honesty and faith in its methods. This work is not for show. *Mohalla* committees and *mandal* committees should be formed in the cities. Those who are not willing to give their time should not be included in these committees. But by making such an organisation we do not want to quarrel with the Government. It is quite another thing, if the Government likes to pick up a quarrel, but from our side there will be no quarrel. We want to strengthen the masses so that we may be in a position to face the war. If you make such an organisation it will serve you in the time of need. There is no doubt that it will be of great help to you. Whatever the situation it has to be faced. If panic spreads, you and the Congressmen in general and our organisation should all deal with it unitedly. Remember the message that our organisation will be ours and our principles will be maintained. We will carry on our work peacefully. We will not allow our volunteers to indulge in quarrels and we shall maintain discipline.

I am not aware of what is happening in your district or in your city, but in big cities there are A.R.P. organisations. On making an enquiry in Deoria, it was found that there were orders for making underground shelters in connection with the A.R.P. work, so that if aircraft should visit Deoria, people may get into those trenches. This is a strange thing which appears to be useless to me. A useless thing to which we should not pay any attention. Let an aircraft come. When time comes, we will distribute pamphlets on behalf of the Congress explaining what should be done on such occasions. Much useless material is being published on behalf of the Government in connexion with the A.R.P. work.

It is said that pamphlets distributed in Allahabad advise people to sleep under their beds immediately on hearing the siren. It is something which makes one laugh as it can never be of any advantage.

I do not know much about A.R.P. The officers know something more than I. Before the outbreak of this war at least twice I had been in two big cities which were being bombed by aircraft. I saw it myself. In Spain, Barcelona is a big city. Bombs were regularly dropped on it. I stayed there for five days. Every day in the night bombs were dropped and houses damaged. From this I acquired some experience. Then I went to China. There I saw it for twelve days. Thus to some extent I have seen air raids. These people who come from Europe giving us advice, do not know anything nor have they seen air raids. Whether it be the Collector or the tahsildar, he cannot visualise the real picture. So they indulge in useless talks. In Deoria trenches have been dug which can accommodate three thousand people and which are $4\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long and $2\frac{1}{2}$ ft. wide. When an aircraft arrives they are supposed to sleep there or do whatever they like. If there is bombing those trenches will easily turn into graves. This is the position and I can say that what is being done by Government officials is quite useless. Some of the steps being taken by the Government are correct while others are worthless, but the way in which they function is quite wrong. We are not cooperating with the A.R.P. work in any way. We want people to get the correct and complete information. If complete information is available there will be less alarm.

It is the duty of all of us, of each and every man, to protect himself, and we shall do that with mutual cooperation. It is not the habit of our British Government to make efforts to gain the cooperation of the people. It knows only to carry on the administration through its officers but none obeys its orders. Threats and punishments may compel one to obey them but that is not useful.

If you want to do real work, then produce sufficient foodstuffs, promote cottage industries, become volunteers, and organise yourselves. You must have an organisation in every village and city. Out of every ten, twenty, or fifty men there should be one such man who should establish contact with your family members. Through such an organisation you will be able to fulfil great tasks. If your organisation is strong you can do whatever you like. You can even carry on the administration of the Swaraj Government through that organisation.

You must have noticed that the world is passing through a strange crisis. You must also be knowing that a big meeting of the Congress Working Committee took place at Bardoli in Gujarat province. Mahatma Gandhi was present there. You must have read in the newspapers the resolutions that were passed in it. Many people think that a difference

of opinion arose between Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee and they have now come to the parting of the ways. Many such things are being talked about. These are baseless talks. How can there be friction between Mahatmaji and the Congress Committee? The present Congress should be considered as Mahatmaji's child. When big problems come forth every one has to give his opinion on them. After taking the opinion of all, a final decision is taken on that basis. If the opinion of all these people has no effect, it is no panchayat. Sometimes it so happens that on a particular question Mahatma Gandhi has one opinion and the panchayat has another. But whatever decision the panchayat takes all the people act unitedly according to it. There cannot be any friction between Gandhiji and the Congress. After the Bardoli session a big panchayat meeting of the All India Congress Committee was held at Wardha and it was decided by Gandhiji and others that we should not cooperate with the Government in this war. Had our country been free the people would have found a way and done something.

What can we do today? That we should get men recruited for the armies of the British Government is a worthless task. Our old policy with regard to the war still holds good for which we even went to jails. But there has been one development. The satyagraha that was launched has now been withdrawn. Why? Not because there is a difference of opinion amongst us or there is something else but because Mahatma Gandhi thought that some more far-reaching problems had arisen than the individual satyagraha. For instance bombs can fall over the city of Calcutta. Japanese aircraft can bomb that city. If at such a time we go to Calcutta and ask the residents to offer satyagraha it would be futile. The people there are disturbed today. Six to seven lakhs of people have evacuated Calcutta. Should they protect themselves or go to jails by regularly offering satyagraha? However, if the Government sends us to jails we shall go. For instance, I have delivered a speech and if your District Magistrate files a suit against me, I shall go to jail. It does not matter at all if I am arrested while doing Congress work. I shall go to jail. But now it is no time for offering satyagraha and getting arrested because today we have got to do much more important work. It is my duty to face the difficulties I am confronted with. Suppose tomorrow bombs are dropped over Calcutta or over Allahabad, so I should prepare the people for that eventuality. If I go to jail I shall not be able to do the service that I am capable of. Therefore as more important tasks have to be undertaken, Mahatmaji decided not to carry on the satyagraha in the old manner. But, remember that at the pace at which the world is changing one cannot say what will happen after six months. After six months the British Government may not remain in India.

After six months which people and which cities will survive cannot be said. At this juncture we can do one thing. We should become fearless. You should remove fear from your hearts altogether and serve the people, protect them and carry on the revolution. We can serve the people in this manner. If we cannot do this all our slogans and other acts are useless.

Now I shall say a few words in regard to the welcome address presented to me by the students. I am glad to meet the students because they have enthusiasm and their minds are clear. After all when they grow up they will have to shoulder the burden of the country. The future of the country depends on the students of today.

My attention has been drawn towards the factional quarrels that exist among the students here. Perhaps the reasons behind these quarrels are not of a serious nature, but the manner in which they are being carried on and the personal attacks that have been made are not healthy. You are aware that I am of the opinion that students should take interest in political matters and in a general manner about India too. They should also devote themselves to studies because if they leave their studies their knowledge will not increase and they will not be able to solve the future problems of India. They may leave their studies for offering satyagraha only when it is understood that by doing so they are participating in the big problems facing the country and then they should bring forward new programmes for action. If our students can take such decisions it is admirable. If they are so capable they should leave colleges and universities and take the reins of the country in their hands. Students should meet together, hold meetings, express their opinions on particular questions. They should not mind whether their opinions are against me or in my favour because they have a full right to express their opinions and they should in fact hold debates. But when they start considering it their duty to declare that the Congress policy is a blunder, it does not befit them. Some of the students follow a policy which is altogether against the national policy of the Congress. They have every right to do so but the manner in which all this is done can have no effect on the masses. It should not be forgotten that one gains experience by taking lessons. If after understanding the present-day events and gaining experience, they consider that their bones are strong enough only then they should participate in politics but not join or form political parties. There are already sufficient numbers of political parties and if students also form numerous factions they cannot make any progress. The formation of political factions has ruined the students' movement here. I tell you that the students' movement does not even have those special characteristics which should always be there in a

students' movement and therefore you have to preserve whatever strength you possess. Today's events that are happening are not outside the sphere of the students' movement. There are at present some people who characterise our national policy as harmful and are weakening the students' movement. This is not proper. I shall help you as far as possible but you have to reduce your differences. You have to march cautiously and maintain your strength.

You know that I will be returning to Allahabad after visiting Gorakhpur. It is just possible now I may not be able to meet you for a long time. I was on tour, so I could meet you. Kisans, you should not be worried. Even if I do not come to you, you should, and I hope you will, remember what I have told you today and prepare yourselves on those lines. Do not get alarmed and worried. You may have to face many calamities. There may be Hindu-Muslim riots, Government may resort to oppression, or some other happenings may occur in the country. But you should act in such a manner that at the time of emergency you may be able to do good to your district, your city and your country.

35. Cable to V. K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
February 2, 1942

Your cables received. I appreciate your attitude.² Congress policy is clearly defined and Bardoli resolution has subsequently been confirmed. This must not be extended despite interested interpretations. British Government's policy makes cooperation impossible and independent action under circumstances ineffective. Too late now for us to meet developing situation except through our policy which strengthens and organises people. Congress expressed full sympathy with China and Russia.³ But unable go further under present circumstances. Azad advises us against formal association with committees abroad but you have my and

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his cable of 22 January 1942, Krishna Menon wanted clarity and firmness in Jawaharlal's statements.

3. The Working Committee resolution passed at Bardoli on 30 December 1941 expressed full sympathy for the Soviet Union and China.

Vijayalakshmi's good wishes for Indo-Soviet Committee.⁴ I am inaugurating Friends of Soviet Conference at Lucknow on fifteenth February.⁵

Nehru

4. The Indian Committee for Aid to the Soviet Union was formed in London, with Jawaharlal and Vijayalakshmi Pandit as Patrons and Krishna Menon as Chairman. Islammul Haq and Surat Ali were Secretaries.
5. Postponed till 22 February 1942. For Jawaharlal's speech see *post*, item 43.

36. U.P.P.C.C. Council's Instructions to Congressmen¹

The Council of the U.P.P.C.C. invite the attention of Congressmen in general and Congress committees in particular to the programme of work adopted by the A.I.C.C. at its recent meeting at Wardha. This programme has to be considered against the background of a developing situation which is everyday bringing the war nearer to India's frontiers and when the economic and other consequences of the war are already being acutely felt by the people of India. As such this programme must have precedence over all other claims on the time and energies of Congressmen. Even before the meeting of the A.I.C.C. the Council had drawn up an outline of work for Congress committees in the Province. The Council note with satisfaction that several committees have already taken steps in this direction. They feel that it is necessary now to give more detailed instructions with a view to coordinate effort and give uniformity to the work to be done. These instructions, however, are not meant to circumscribe local initiative which must, to some extent, be guided by local circumstances.

The work which has to be taken in hand immediately may be divided into three main sections: (a) maintenance of the public peace, (b) relief of economic distress, and (c) service in emergency. The nature of the work and the type of organization behind it will necessarily differ somewhat as between urban and rural areas, but the governing principles and the objectives must be the same in both areas. In any event, and more particularly in regard to economic matters, there must be coordination between town and village and an attempt to establish an equilibrium between them.

1. Issued at Allahabad on 5 February 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This was drafted by Jawaharlal.

Maintenance of the public peace irrespective of army measures that the Government may adopt for the purpose—the Congress must shoulder the responsibility for maintaining the public peace and of doing its utmost in this behalf both in urban and rural areas. A chain of men or women, in charge of this work in their respective areas, and responsible to the Congress organization, but not necessarily Congressmen, should be built up from the village and the part of a *mohalla* right up to the district. It may not be possible to get suitable persons at the start in every village and every *mohalla*. A beginning should at once be made with larger areas and those in charge of these units should be asked to make the necessary appointments for the smaller units under their jurisdiction. The duties of such persons will consist mainly of establishing and maintaining contacts with the people in their locality seeking their cooperation in the protection of that area and the maintenance of peace, the collection of necessary statistics from that area, and the propagation of such instructions or information as may be received from the district headquarters.

Scarcity of food and other articles of daily use, high prices, growth of unemployment, and difficulties in transport, are already causing economic distress among large numbers of people, and their distress is likely to increase in the near future and become a formidable problem. This work is thus a very important part of our programme. It has so far been entirely neglected by the Government. The problem can only be tackled with a measure of success by the widespread growth of cottage and small-scale industries and by aiming, as far as possible, at self-sufficiency in each area in regard to food and clothing and other necessities. In particular, a village, or a group of villages, should grow at least enough of foodgrains and produce enough of khadi for its own purposes.

The problem of scarcity of foodgrains, especially in cities, should be tackled, in so far as possible, immediately in cooperation with the grain dealers and other like merchants and propaganda must be carried on against hoarding and profiteering, so as to ensure the supply of grain to the public at reasonable rates.

Congressmen should invite the cooperation of all sections, notably the propertied classes, in the organization of relief, and an attempt should be made to provide suitable alternative occupation to those thrown out of work. Hand-spinning and hand-weaving have a primary importance in this connection. Besides giving economic relief to large numbers, they will help to ease the situation caused by the scarcity and rising price of cloth. Attempts should also be made to introduce new cottage industries and handicrafts and to produce substitutes for such manufactured

goods as the market cannot easily supply now. This is essentially a field where local initiative has the fullest scope.

This Province has very little to fear from air raids and, in any event, the possible danger is confined to a few urban localities. In the event of an emergency arising, some simple rules and methods understood by the people will be of far greater value than elaborate and expensive arrangements on paper which can seldom be translated into practice and which create panic where no panic is at all necessary or desirable. The U.P.P.C.C. will issue at an early date a pamphlet giving simple directions in regard to air precautions. Congress workers and organizers, and more especially those in charge of *mohallas*, should render all possible service in case of emergency and in the cities where this can be arranged, should receive training in first aid, nursing, fire-fighting etc. Such training is useful in itself and adds considerably to the efficiency of the worker. These workers, it should be noted, need not necessarily be Congressmen but they should work under the Congress discipline. Congressmen will avoid conflict with the authorities.

In all these activities envisaged for Congressmen, they can only render effective service to the people with the full cooperation of the people. They will therefore seek this cooperation from all sections of the population irrespective of religion, class or political opinion, and should also be prepared to cooperate in these tasks with other organizations working in this behalf.

The work outlined above requires careful planning and constant attention. In particular, it requires an organization, widespread, responsible and flexible, and in touch with the mass of the people. The principle of making each worker definitely responsible for the particular work entrusted to him should be followed, and he should be required to report at fixed intervals to his superior authority.

In cities each ward or *mohalla* should be divided into convenient parts consisting of approximately fifty to a hundred houses, and each such part should be put in responsible charge of a worker. In rural areas, each village or group of villages should also be put in charge of a worker.

The district Congress committee should appoint an individual in charge of all this work in the district and he should seek his own associates and colleagues who will be responsible to him and through him to the district committee. The committee may appoint, if it so chooses, separate individuals in charge of separate departments of activity and these persons should then function as a small committee in order to coordinate their activities. In districts where there are city Congress committees, the district Congress committee and the city Congress committee may nominate separately the organisers of their respective

areas; or, if it is prepared, the two may meet together to elect one person in charge of the whole area. The district Congress committee as well as the city Congress committee, where such exists, will exercise general supervision over the work in their districts or cities. If the D.C.C. so chooses, it may appoint a small committee to do this supervision on its behalf. Fortnightly reports should be submitted by all persons in charge of any area or any particular work. This work of organization should be completed as rapidly as possible.

The first work that should be undertaken by the persons in charge of each area will be to collect statistics from that city or village area. These statistics should consist of:

1. Number of men, women and children.
2. Cottage, small-scale industries and handicrafts.
3. The food situation.
4. The number of spinners and weavers.
5. The number of unemployed and those likely to become unemployed in the near future owing to the consequences of the war and the cessation of their normal businesses.
6. Doctors, nurses, dispensaries &c. in the area.
7. In cities — open spaces in the area.
8. Available accommodation both in towns and villages for refugees and evacuees.
9. Possible alternative means of transport in case the present means fail.
10. In villages the extent of food crops raised and their sufficiency or otherwise for the local population. The possibility of substituting the present crops for foodgrains.
11. Number of wells available.

Each small area, village or part of a city, should raise people from that area for service and protection against unsocial elements in times of emergency. Such workers will serve only in their respective localities and may consist of other than Congressmen. They will undertake to serve all people equally without regard to religion or sect, to observe discipline and to adhere to peaceful methods. They will not be drilled and need not have uniforms, but simple distinguishing badges may be supplied to them. They may be required, if necessity arises, for watch and ward duty in their own areas.

All organizers and workers should see to it that there is no panic or uneasiness in their areas and the population develops self-reliance and the capacity for self-help in times of need. Communal unity must

always be emphasized and encouraged. Continuous propaganda should be carried on in favour of cottage and small-scale industries and the consumption of their products. In cities as in villages, special centres of spinning may be organized. The state of the grain market should be continually kept under observation and contact maintained with the grain dealers. In rural areas the ideal of self-sufficiency in food and clothing must be stressed and worked for.

A special effort should be made to approach the women of each locality with a view to organize them and train them for service when possible. In cities, first aid and nursing training should be given to them.

37. Workers and the War¹

After several years I am participating today in the meeting of the Trade Union Congress. Thirteen years ago I got a chance to become the President of the Congress.² I regret that during these thirteen years I was not much in touch with the work of the Congress. I had contacts with the peasantry, workers and the general public, but I remained quite aloof from the work of the Trade Union Congress in particular. The main reason for this was that during this period of thirteen years, I remained in jail for five years and for some years outside India. During this and the remaining period, I was busy in other works. The condition of the Trade Union Congress was such that on account of party factions and internal disputes I was wondering what useful purpose I could serve by joining it. It was for this reason also that I did not participate in its activities. I am, therefore, glad today that I have again been able to participate in the meeting of this Congress. I am glad to learn, as the President has just now observed, that the various differences which arose in this Congress have been removed, and the various groups have sunk their differences and have gathered together here. They have come here after a reconciliation. But it is feared that fissures are opening

1. Inaugural speech at the 19th session of the A.I.T.U.C., Kanpur, 8 February 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941. File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

2. Jawaharlal was President of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1929. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 27-80.

out again on account of the controversy about India's attitude towards the war.³

I am participating in your meeting after years and have today come to Cawnpore after a year and a half. I am greatly worried. I wonder what I should say to the Trade Union Congress at the present juncture because you and I are bound by a common tie. I have such ties with the people of Cawnpore, with its brave workers, with the *mazdoor* party and with everybody else that I do not know what I should tell you on this occasion. This is a long tale. There are so many points to be dealt with. I do not know on what point I should speak to you. I also wonder whether I would again get an opportunity of attending the Trade Union Congress and I also do not know when the Trade Union Congress will meet again. It is a strange world. The political situation keeps changing.

No one can say whether we will do the same thing tomorrow what we are doing today, and whether the Trade Union Congress will continue to enjoy its present national status. The world is changing fast. The session of your Congress was going to be held in Calcutta. But emergency was promulgated there.⁴ Apart from emergency a number of other laws have been promulgated by the Governor there. Hence your Congress could not hold its session there and had to be postponed. It was decided to hold it here. No one can say when emergency will be promulgated in Cawnpore or in the whole province. It is not impossible that it may be enforced in the whole of India. Even martial law might be imposed. It is not a mere conjecture. All these developments are possible. I, therefore, wonder when its session would be held in future and whether I would get an opportunity to participate in it.

These thoughts are passing through my mind. What a strange world it is! As I was listening to the speech of Dr. Pillai,⁵ I was also thinking

3. The President of the A.I.T.U.C., V.R. Kalappa, attacked the formation of a rival organisation "under the guise of anti-fascist front, so soon after unity was achieved after ten years of hard struggle." In November 1941, M.N. Roy, Jamnadas Mehta, M.A. Khan and others planned to form an Indian Federation of Labour. Kalappa therefore insisted that "in order to avoid future splits unity should be based on some sound democratic principles so that all principal questions as well as questions of strikes and affiliation with any foreign organisation be decided by three-fourths majority."

4. On 24 December 1941, by a Government notification, a state of emergency was declared in Calcutta.

5. P.P. Pillai (1894-1977); Indian representative in the International Labour Organisation, 1929-47; permanent representative of India in the United Nations, 1947-49; Ambassador to Japan, 1949; his works include *India and the I.L.O.* and *Labour in South-East Asia*.

over it. Some of his observations⁶ were reasonable but some of them were in my opinion not reasonable. He has placed only one side of the picture before you. I have no complaint against him. But what picture is there before you? What I see is that rivers of blood are flowing, great empires are collapsing, a tempest is raging, lakhs of people are dying, countries are falling, and calamities are visiting the people. Now this bloodshed has come close to your country. I cannot shut my eyes to it. I try to understand it. Is there peace, progress, reputation and honour in this world? Everything has ended here. Why should we shoulder the burden of others? We are not the custodians of the world. We are only the custodians of this country. How long are we to bear the burden of others? We have to take care of our own country. Others may go to hell or heaven, let us talk of our own world. When all others are becoming free why should we remain slaves? When we think over any matter, we have to think about the whole world. We have to think about our duties, our sufferings, our subjection, and matters relating to our freedom. Some of our brethren raise slogans these days. It is good to raise slogans. But there is a time for doing so. Why should such slogans be raised as have not been approved by the Congress and the general public? Raising of slogans in the name of the general public does not mean that the people of the country are weak. Do they want the public to adopt their slogans by resorting to force and goondaism? I do not think that the city of Cawnpore is a believer in the cult of the lathi, but it is possible that some people may drag the country backwards by raising wrong slogans. The only slogan of the workers of the world is: "Workers of the world unite."

Think, what the workers of the world are doing today? They are cutting each other's throats. They are attacking each other. The peasants of the world are in fact workers who are fighting among themselves, and cutting each other's throats. It is the workers who are producing armaments in factories and are thereby bringing about the destruction of each other. Put this side of the picture before you. Such a slogan,

6. In his speech he emphasized that the impact of war and an objective view of its developments in Malaya and Burma compelled Indian labour to take full stock of the situation afresh and to define the principles and the ultimate objective for which it stood. Indian labour, at this critical time, had to play an important role in achieving victory for democracy.

that this is the "people's war"⁷ is not likely to take you towards freedom. These people have no right to deceive the world by raising such slogans. The world is not prepared to believe in such slogans. The condition of the world is very complicated and abnormal.

It is the workers and peasants of the world who, by arming themselves with guns and producing aeroplanes, are destroying each other's countries. This is the condition of the world today. There are the workers of Germany, workers of England, workers of other countries and workers of our country. The war is raging. Today the British Government is ruling over us. In India factories are running. But workers forget that their country is on the verge of destruction, is uneasy, wants freedom and is in a state of bondage. It would be no wonder when the time comes it may take a bold step for freedom, and for bringing about revolution. The people of those countries, where the governments are in the hands of workers and peasants, fight for their fatherlands. When we sympathise with other countries and their freedom, how can we forget the freedom of our own country? We should first of all think of our own country. Being in a state of bondage we should put the question of the freedom of our country in the forefront. There is not the slightest hope of better conditions for workers and peasants during the present regime. If Dr. Pillai ponders over this coolly, this point will become quite clear to him. We should form an opinion after considering the conditions of other countries also. The condition of the world is changing very rapidly. We can think of the freedom of other countries only when we are ourselves free. Now there is not much time to think over. There are many obstacles in our way. But our country will achieve its freedom by overcoming these obstacles. Now, such a time has come that it is difficult for anyone to say what is going to happen in future. We have expressed our sympathy with Russia and Spain but not with fascism and Nazism. But this does not mean that we should put an end to our struggle for freedom and start helping the British Government. It is impossible that we should bow our heads before this British Government. Now the position is that the British regime is coming to an end. It is not competent enough to grant us freedom. We have to achieve freedom ourselves.

7. After the Soviet Union's entry into the war on 21 June 1941, on 15 December 1941, the Politbureau of the Communist Party of India embraced the "people's war" policy: "We are a practical party, and in a new situation it is our task not only to evolve a new form of struggle for it, but also to advance new slogans appropriate to the new stage, suiting the new form of our national movement. The keystone of our party, which guides all our practical political activity, is, 'Make the Indian people play a people's role in the 'people's war.'"

But I am sure the peasants and workers of India will win freedom. Except for a few persons no one wants to give help in the war. If I say at this time that the British Government should be given help in the war then no one would listen to me. As you love me and respect me, you will listen to me but will not act upon what I say because this is against human sentiment. I will not venture to utter such a thing. As long as the country does not get freedom, it is futile to think of giving any help. You know in what position the British Government is placed today. The war is going on for two years and a half. Fierce battles are being fought. You have seen that so far it has not achieved anything meritorious. This British nation did not prove itself a pastmaster in the art of war as is given out. The country of Malaya has fallen victim to the war. The British may or may not have won any battle but in Malaya they have indeed won one battle which is known by the name of the Battle of Kalanga.⁸

What kind of battle that was, I will tell you. Indian labourers were working there in the tea-gardens. They went on a strike. These labourers wanted that they should be given the same wages as were given to the Chinese labourers. Small planters considered the demand of the Indians reasonable but big planters rejected their demand. All the planters decided that no one should raise wages separately. On this point the labourers struck work. To these labourers the supply of water was stopped. Water could not be had from anywhere else. They began to die of thirst. A majority of them were from Madras. They could not even buy rice from the shops. It was not permitted. They had no coupons to buy rice. They were in distress. But they continued the hartal. Military was requisitioned. The soldiers were Indians and the officers Englishmen. The Australian troops came first but their officers said they had not come there to settle domestic disputes and they refused to obey. Indian troops were then requisitioned. The officers were Englishmen. They said to Indian soldiers, "The labourers are rioting, open fire on them." Fire was opened on the labourers at Kalanga and a large number of them were killed. This is called the Battle of Kalanga. This battle the English have surely won.

I ask Dr. Pillai what the International Labour Organisation has done for the labourers. My blood boils and I am filled with rage that the British made our forces open fire on the labourers. This has become our practice—that in the name of democracy we open fire upon others and make them slaves like ourselves. Could our National Government tolerate such a thing? I am fed up with the talk of democracy.

8. See *ante*, p. 70.

How long am I to hear it? It is no longer necessary to hear it. Every day some speech is broadcast from Delhi and also by the B.B.C. from London. How long is one to hear these speeches when we are seeing before our very eyes that the edifice of imperialism is falling and is being uprooted? The situation is that in Asia, British imperialism today exists only because of China, and in Europe it is safe because of Russia. Because of China and Russia it is alive in the world though its strength is decreasing every day. It has no power to revive itself, and in India the English bureaucracy has the same pride, the same snobbery, the same bombast, the same enjoyment and merry-making as before as if there were no war in progress. This then is the condition of the officers in our country. They forget that a bloody war is raging outside this country. We have every sympathy with Russia in the war which it is waging. But it is impossible for us to give up the fight for freedom which the Congress has started. So long as we are not free, India will not be in a position to render any help whatsoever and there is no reason why the Congress should change its attitude as long as there is no change in the policy of the British Government. People argue that I have been inconsistent and have changed my attitude by not giving help to China and Russia. This appears to be an absurd allegation because Russia and China are not fighting for the freedom of others. They are fighting for their own freedom, honour and safety. So long as India does not attain freedom, to help Russia in this war is to strengthen the chain of our own slavery. You may very well say that we should help the British because Britain, China and Russia are united and so this war is ours. But what we have learnt so far, we cannot forget. Whosoever attacks us, we will face him. United we should face him who oppresses us. We have learnt to fight and to face and until we achieve freedom we will continue to do so. Let the British go to hell!

If even Germany or Japan comes, united we shall face them also. We have no grudge against Germany. But we dislike her ways and her dictatorship. I feel very much offended if anyone advises that we should help the British because the conditions would worsen if Japan or Germany come here. Has it become our lot to remain slaves of someone or the other—slaves of Japan and Germany if not of the British? I may tell such people that we shall not remain slaves of anyone. The British rule for their own selfish ends. Great capitalists are earning lakhs of rupees but our peasants and workers are starving. This is the condition of our country. My blood boils when I hear someone say 'Let the enemy come, we shall bow before him; let him rule over us.' We are fighting for freedom for the last twenty or forty years, and we cannot tolerate anyone else coming and ruling over us. I cannot say what will

happen. A country which fights for freedom cannot tolerate foreign domination. We shall all face the enemy in the same way as we are fighting the British Government today. The people should organise themselves in accordance with the orders of the Congress and snatch freedom from this British Government whose roots have already given way. The Englishmen who are in India are still posing like *tanashah*. They are worthless and they do not know how to rule.

In the name of great principles like democracy and patriotism we are asked to help in this war. Appeals are made to the public. If those worthy people, who make such appeals, think with a balanced mind it will be clear to them that these principles are inapplicable when crores of people are hungry and marked, and are dying of starvation.

Is our country free today? When our country is not free and the machinery of the Government is not run with our consent, the question of help in the war does not arise at all. All factories and industrial concerns in India are producing war material. In your city of Cawnpore orders worth crores of rupees are being placed and these workers are manufacturing material only to kill the workers of other countries. It is only the workers and the peasants who are helping in the bloodshed. It is the peasants who are in the armies and are cutting one another's throats. In spite of this war, the Government never endeavoured to give a fillip to the Indian industry. I have been the President of the National Planning Committee. It has always been the desire of the Government that this Committee should not work. When I was in jail the papers that were received in regard to this Committee were not delivered to me. In the present war there is a great need for aeroplanes and lorries. They could have been manufactured in India. Ships could also have been built here but the British Government did not want these things to be manufactured in India because this would have meant a great loss to the British capitalists. Indians were ready to invest money and manufacture all these things but the Government did not permit them to do so. The Government formed an Eastern Group Supply Council with the object of exporting raw material from India to Australia for the manufacture of such things as should have been manufactured here. Do you see that in this way all the profit is being earned by Australia? South Africa also shares it as new factories are set up there as well. This Council met at Delhi. British officers also participated in it. They were quite inefficient and incompetent. They should be sent to the front to die. Those who dream of residing at Simla and Delhi for six months are not fit to rule. Their power is coming to an end and mighty nations are falling. No one knows what will happen tomorrow. My heart is filled with grief.

Now the question is, what is the British Government going to do at this juncture? It is absurd to think that it would grant us Swaraj. It has no power now to grant it. Now the question is how can we achieve it? You can achieve it when you have power to do so. We should organise ourselves in order to achieve freedom. Every district should be organised. We should improve our conditions and put a stop to party factions. Propaganda should be carried on in every village and in every *mohalla* so that we may be able to advance resolutely. If Indians have strength in them, freedom can be achieved in no time. We should sink our differences.

The citizens of Cawnpore are brave. Here one thousand five hundred persons were arrested for offering satyagraha and an equal number of persons offered themselves for arrest but the police did not arrest them. The citizens of Cawnpore are well known for their bravery since 1857, but it is unfortunate that people of your city and district quarrel among themselves. To quarrel among ourselves is not bravery. It is a sign of weakness. Now is the time of trial. Do not weaken yourselves by quarrelling among yourselves.

I do not think that aeroplanes will visit our Province and drop bombs. And if it does happen we shall have to face it. If cities like Cawnpore and Allahabad are bombed, the A.R.P. arrangements that are being made will prove useless. Besides, whatever the Government is doing is devoid of common sense and is worthless. It cannot protect us. All this is a mere show on the part of the Government and nothing else. I have just come from Gorakhpur. Arrangements for the protection of the people are being made there. Trenches are being dug in order that the people of Gorakhpur may take shelter in them. What protection can these trenches afford? The Government only knows to do worthless things. We do not want to stand in its way. It may do as it pleases. India's defence can never be properly organised unless it is entrusted to the people. You should not be panic-stricken during the raid.

Time is very short. You should make your arrangements. It is quite possible that trains may be stopped. Such things can happen. You should organise yourselves in cooperation with the Congress. You should forget your disputes. If you go on quarrelling among yourselves, how will you protect yourselves? It is useless to expect anything from the British Government, because it cannot defend even itself. It only knows how to fire on an unarmed people, just as in Malaya. Had there been our government, it would never have tolerated such an incident.

Before concluding I want to say that the Trade Union Congress should sink its differences and the two groups should work together; I am not suggesting that the decision of the Trade Union Congress should be such



WITH MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK, FEBRUARY 1942



ARRIVING AT A PUBLIC MEETING, DELHI, FEBRUARY 1942

as may be against the voice of the Congress and the country. Your President has stated that you have a right to take part in politics. You should seriously ponder over it. But the country is faced with a situation in which it is necessary for the people to have a policy which should not weaken the country. I hope there will be unity in the country. We should forget all our differences. There are, here in India, trade unions, kisan sabhas and various other organisations. All these should have a common policy. They should talk of nothing else but their motherland. If anyone comes forward with a new idea which is against the views of the public such an idea would be dangerous for the country.

38. A World Federation of Nations¹

We are living in the midst of a great war and we are very conscious of this. The war is big, and yet it is only a part of the tremendous revolution that is going on around us. Great nations have gone down and empires have cracked up before our eyes. But even greater changes in the whole structure of the world are likely to come. No one can say what changes are going to take place. But every intelligent person must realise that the whole world is in a process of dissolution, and will give place to something new. To think in terms of the old world which is disappearing, and to imagine that the future will be after the pattern of the past, is to lose touch with the reality and to perish with the past.

During times of war, our passions are aroused. We are excited, we are horrified, we are duped by the propaganda, campaign of hatred and mutual condemnation that surround us. It becomes difficult to understand what is happening and still more difficult to appreciate the causes of the events. We think in terms of nations and national leaders like Churchill, Roosevelt, Hitler, Stalin and Chiang Kai-shek. These leaders are playing an important part and yet they may be just puppets of destiny moved about hither and thither by the elemental forces that have been let loose. There will be no rest for these forces or for the world until a new equilibrium has been attained.

1. Speech at Progressive Club, Allahabad, 9 February 1942. From *National Herald*, 10 February 1942.

Why did the war come? Because the world lacked equilibrium and huge unresolved problems confronted it. No country and no political and economic structure which cannot solve the major problems of today can survive. Western civilisation has arrived at a stage when it cannot solve its problems without changing itself. It did not change itself by its own free will and now it is going to be changed through the storm of war.

We have often been told of our failings in India and they are many indeed. Above all we are not efficient. If efficiency is a true test of civilisation or if a successful war by modern means is a test, then it would appear that Hitler and the Japanese would survive these tests and Western nations would deteriorate. Efficiency and like virtues are equally important and if a country lacks them, it fails ultimately to find stability. During the last two hundred years, the imposing structure of Western industrial civilisation rose before our eyes. It had to its credit magnificent achievements and it dominated the world, yet after a brief span of some years it started cracking up. Those achievements will no doubt survive but that structure will have to undergo a vital change, if it is to survive.

And looking back over the long period of history I am amazed at the inner strength that India and China have shown through repeated trials and crises. They have managed to keep up that cultural inheritance which has been their hallmark. China impresses me tremendously, so also India, when I consider these past five or six thousand years since Mohenjo Daro. It is undoubted that innumerable weaknesses and failings have gathered around us, yet something of the old strength continues. I feel that this type of strength has been somehow lacking in Europe for the last two hundred years. And the peoples of Europe and America, proud of their achievements, became conceited and pompous and overbearing, not realising that while they had much to teach, they had much to learn also, that while they had built mighty structures, they had missed often enough the inner core of things.

Today death and destruction go on a large scale and people talk of victory over this country or that. If we are wise enough we should try to understand the deeper causes of events, try to find out where we really lack which makes us fall to pieces, and try to picture the new world as to what it shall be and fight for this. Battles and wars may be won largely by the army but a vast revolution is not going to be so simply disposed of. It has to be won by a true psychological understanding of events and by the courage to face them.

I am concerned with the fate of the world because I cannot isolate my country from the rest and yet inevitably India counts for me much as

nothing else can. But that India itself counts as a part of that larger world. Whatever happens to my country and my people affects me powerfully. On no account am I going to submit to a humiliation of India whatever the consequences. It is a small matter after all if individuals perish provided the spirit and the soul of a nation survive.

Professors and others know more than I do about the many problems that we have in India—political, economic, social and others. Yet behind all these problems there is a psychological problem and during all these twenty years and more we have been at grips with this psychological problem—how to save the spirit and soul of India and how to remove the fear complex from our people? Unless this is done all else is immaterial. I think we have succeeded in a large measure though much remains to be done. I judge everything, and all political activity, from this psychological viewpoint—what reaction will it have on people's courage?

So far as the British Empire is concerned, there is no doubt that it is over. As an Empire it already seems to belong to history. The group of nations with which Britain is assisted might win the war, but the British Empire will not survive this war. As far as I am concerned the conception of empire and the very mention of the word irritate me. The sooner the empires end, the better. Today, strangely enough, the main props of Britain, without whom the British Empire would have collapsed completely, are America, Russia and China. America for the time being is far away and can only give supplies. It is mostly Russia and China that are keeping up the British structure in Europe and Asia.

I feel sure that in the future India, China and Russia will be drawn closer to one another for they have so much in common. But their drawing closer would not be against any other group or groups of nations. For my part I want a world federation of nations. America is a young country full of youth and vitality and must inevitably go ahead, though many fundamental changes will have to take place there. The future will probably see Asia and America in the forefront and not Europe as during the past few generations.

39. Power Must be in National Hands¹

Question: It has been suggested in some quarters that Marshal Chiang Kai-shek's visit² to India and his talks with Indian leaders might lead to a better appreciation of the need for the Government and political parties to pull together for the maximum war effort.³ What is your comment on this question?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I decline to make a statement on the Generalissimo's visit at this stage but the inferences that some quarters are drawing from the visit as regards its influence on the internal situation are entirely unjustified.

Q: How far in your opinion do the proposals embodied in Sir T.B. Sapru's cable to Mr. Churchill⁴ provide a practical solution of the present situation in India?

JN: There is no solution of the Indian problem except full transferance of power to national hands responsible to the people. It is obvious that power cannot be shared by two elements pulling in different directions. Presumably that is what the Government of India thinks and

1. Interview to *The Statesman*, New Delhi, 13 February 1942. From *The Statesman*, 14 February 1942.
2. Chiang Kai-shek accompanied by Madame Chiang visited India from 9 to 21 February 1942. See *post*, section 5.
3. The *Times*, in an editorial on 11 February 1942, hoped that General Chiang "will no doubt make the acquaintance of leaders of Indian opinion and will be able to impress them with his own conviction that the fate of all southern and eastern Asia, including India, lay upon the outcome of the struggle." The *Tribune*, in an editorial on 12 February 1942, wrote, "there is every reason to hope that the Chinese General's visit to India, though naturally it has not and cannot possibly have any direct political bearings, will have a vitally important political consequence in expediting a solution of the impasse in India. Should this hope be realised its immediate effect would be a material intensification of the war-effort in India, exactly the thing that is needed for a speedy Allied victory in the eastern war."
4. Thirteen prominent non-party and Liberal leaders, including Sapru, sent an appeal to Churchill in Washington on 4 January 1942, urging him to declare that India would no longer be treated as a dependency, and that henceforth her constitutional position and powers would be identical with those of other units of the British Commonwealth. Churchill responded to the appeal on 20 January 1942 and promised a statement and discussion of the Indian problem in the House of Commons.

perhaps that is why it wants to keep all power to itself. Sharing power would bring incompatible elements together which is undesirable at any time and more so at a moment of crisis.

Q: Since you maintain that power must be in national hands, what difference will such a transference make on the war effort?

JN: It is patent that a free National Government would be intensely interested in the rapid development of Indian industry. In fact the whole future of India is bound up with this problem, as also the present crisis. India has enormous resources, she has scientific ability and the setting up of a National Government would make a vast difference to our production immediately as well as after the war is over. Then, again, the whole economic situation in India requires immediate handling of the problem in order to avoid the growing confusion as we are gradually approaching a situation when scarcity of food will add greatly to the discontent. No foreign government, even if it were competent, could face this successfully, much less the present Government. Only a National Government can do so. This is why the Congress has adopted a programme for dealing with the situation so far as it can.

40. The World Revolution¹

The present international situation is a very important matter for us, for it involves India's reaction to it and India's attitude in regard to it. The situation is not merely of war but much bigger than a war. We usually think in military terms, but it is not the biggest and the most effective army that wins the war. That is an extremely limited view which can mislead us.

We are passing through a big revolution. The biggest the world has ever seen. Other revolutions in the past, however big, had affected only certain parts of the world. This one is going to affect the whole world, which has become inter-related. The only way to understand the causes of this war is to look into the fundamental economic and political contradictions of the present-day society.

Since the last Great War about 120 international conferences have been held to solve the world's problems. But none of them succeeded

¹ Speech at the office of the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, 21 February 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 February 1942.

in solving any of the problems although many of the big statesmen of the world who met realised that failure to solve these problems would invite disaster. This failure was because the solutions suggested were beyond the purview of the existing political and economic structures of the various countries. Ultimately this war came. Some people say that this war is due to the ambitious designs of Hitler and Mussolini. But this is not true. This war was brought about by certain serious contradictions in the modern society. Unless these contradictions were removed the conditions that caused the war would continue. This war might be stopped without these contradictions being solved. But that will not be the end of the war but only an armistice. The problem of war cannot be solved in a military way. The war will not end before another two or three years. It is not easy to defeat Japan and Germany. Nor is it easy to defeat America and Russia. Germany is certainly aiming at a big offensive in the spring, but Russia has not only shown a great spirit of resistance and fighting qualities, but she has the advantage of a stable economic and political structure which very few states are capable of maintaining under the present circumstances. Even if a second German offensive succeeds, I am confident Russia will not be down and out and surrender.

I am sure a new economic and political order will emerge out of this war. The British Empire, as we know it, is passing. There may be a union between England and America on economic and political basis. But the British Government is reactionary. Mr. Churchill is a brilliant leader but he has a Victorian mind. In military matters he may bring himself to think on modern lines, but he has been a deadweight in the sense of real psychological leadership. By brilliant speech he can give a moral tone but unless one has a big conception of the post-war reconstruction, he cannot be a real leader.

I do not know what Hitler stands for. But this much can be said to his credit that he represents something against the defunct order and therefore he could give to the people he led a psychological strength apart from the military strength. Hitler seems to be an agent of destiny to the extent that the days of small nations are now past, in spite of Mr. Jinnah's desire for Pakistan. Even a wrong motive can lead to certain necessary results. The Soviet Union is trying to solve its problems in a more thorough, scientific, and basic way. Hitler, in the way he dealt with unemployment, which England and America failed to solve, represented some elements of a progressive order. But I dislike all that Hitler stands for with his hideous gospel. Hitler is trying to solve problems in a wrong way and not in a right and permanent way. I will resist Hitler and Japan with all my might. But the British Government is still hugging to the old methods and old ways.

The present war may lead to a stalemate and there might arise revolutions out of this stalemate. Then what are we going to do? From the very beginning the Congress has been pursuing a national as well as an international policy. It has been following them consistently. Now certain confusions have arisen, because Stalin has called upon us to adopt a certain international policy.² If we adopt a policy because Stalin has asked us to adopt it, it would be a wrong policy, a wrong method of approach. If I have learnt anything about socialism and Communism it is this that we cannot introduce certain rules and principles only because these are followed by one country. The dominating factor is that Soviet Russia must be saved. But how to save it? Nevertheless, it is dangerous to combine any national policy with another. Even today Soviet policy is far more nationalistic than it is Communistic. If you listen to Moscow broadcasts, you will get abundant proof of this. They have adapted their policy to their national circumstances. Our heart is with China and Russia, but ultimately we have to act in the national context. If we lose sight of it, we are lost.

With war advancing towards our borders, a great responsibility might come to us. It might come any day and any moment, then it would be too late to raise an army for effective defence. If the war has proved anything it is that ineffective resistance is the greatest folly. The pitiable condition of France and some other small countries abundantly proves this. Spending money on ineffective defence is a waste of money. From the practical point of view what we can do is not to surrender. We do not know what exactly we would do. There are hundreds of possibilities. We might have to undertake satyagraha which might lead to shooting. That will sow the seeds of resistance. You know that no regime can survive the right form of resistance. Certainly we are not going to be the tools of the British. We must raise the tone of the people by psychological and organisational means.

During the Bengal Provincial Congress meeting, there were talks about the establishment of a parallel government. This is indulging in tall talk and getting lost in words. A parallel government cannot be brought about by a resolution. The Congress workers should organise volunteer corps for the relief of the refugees and they may also take the

2. The official journal of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, *Bolshevik*, in its issue of September 1941, carried an article by I. Lemin, which called upon democratic peoples to side with the Allies against fascism and Hitler. R. Palme Dutt, of the British Communist Party, in the September issue of the *Labour Monthly*, told the Indian Communists that their support to the war should be unconditional, and asked them not to insist on their achievement of independence.

A.R.P. training. They must move about and ask the people not to get panicky. Freedom from panic is most important in air raids. Shelters or other measures cannot compare with it. People who remain cool and calm during air raids suffer the least.

Question: What is your reaction to the Communist Party's call of a 'people's war'?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The bane of Communism and socialism has been that socialists and Communists spend most of their energies in fighting each other instead of fighting the common enemy.

41. Students and the War¹

We are living in a world of uncertainty. None of us knows what tomorrow will bring to us. It is an exciting world, and an interesting world, a fascinating world, provided of course we do not get frightened. We can witness the interesting and fascinating changes that occur, provided we have in us something of the gambling spirit of life and are not afraid of what happens. We are fairly good at the human game of life and death, we can see the interesting transformations the world is undergoing today and play our part. After all, we all have to play the game of life and death. We indulge in so many activities which we call revolutionary activities in life and shout various slogans. But somehow the time has passed for such activities. More important tasks call each one of us to respond. We do not know how many of us have strength enough to respond, neither you can say nor I, because we do not know how we will function in crises. But it is known to us that sufficient strength is required. It is, therefore, necessary that we should prepare ourselves. People are frightened when the unexpected happens but if the expected happens the shock is not so great. Therefore, prepare yourselves and also help others to prepare themselves.

Obviously a large number of students can play enormous part in great cities like Calcutta in controlling the situation, in preventing panic and excitement. What creates havoc in emergency is fear and panic. Nothing is so dangerous as people getting seized with fear and becoming panicky. Therefore, I beg of you, shout slogans if you like, but still

1. Address at Calcutta University, 21 February 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 February 1942.

do not attach importance to these slogans, look at the facts as they are. We are accustomed to shouting slogans on Indian soil. But if war comes to Indian soil shouting of slogans would be of no help. You will have to face the situation in a real way and not in an imaginary way. I do not care so much about the policy which this party or that party might adopt. Help the party you want to, if you can. But far greater things are happening in the world today and if you isolate yourselves from the mainstream of internationalism, you will do so at your peril. I do not know what changes will have taken place when I meet you next. Sweeping changes are taking place in the world today. We do not know who amongst us will survive. Whatever happens let us play our great part as men and women. If we can do that, I am sure all will be well.

I refuse to speak in English. Take it as you like, but I am going to speak in Hindi and in no other language. I would have been glad if I could have addressed you in Bengali. I am sorry, it hurts me, that in an Indian function like this the proceedings should be conducted in a language of the foreigner.

Do you realise that the present-day world is undergoing tremendous changes? I purposely and deliberately started my speech in Hindi just to see its reaction upon you. You people talk about revolution and yet you conduct your proceedings in a language which is not yours. This is really detestable.

Even slogans you shout are in English. "Workers of the world unite", or "this is a people's war." Did you ever care to know whether your slogans were understood by the people? These slogans have some historical background and they have grown out of certain traditions of the working class. When you shout a slogan before the working class, it at once brings to their mind some impression of how the slogan was evolved. But if you go to a village in India and shout the same slogan it will carry no meaning to the villagers. They will repeat it merely as a catchphrase without understanding the meaning of it. The reason is that you are putting a slogan before them, firstly, in a language which they do not understand and, secondly, relating to a condition which is unreal to them.

What is required is that a speaker must be understood by the audience. Unfortunately for me, my education had not much to do with our language. That is a difficulty which I have felt while speaking to my countrymen. I have worked hard and have been successful in overcoming that difficulty to a great extent. I want to be understood. I know it is desirable that I should speak in Bengali in Bengal, in order to be understood and not to show off.

For some days past we have had two very eminent personalities in Calcutta, Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. The Generalissimo is already a historic figure. He is a man of history. He controls not only the Chinese army but he is the head of the Government in China. He has a remarkable knowledge of foreign affairs. But he does not know a single European language or even a word of it. This is a thing worth remembering. Here is a man who is fighting a great war, fighting in such a way that he has astonished the whole world. When I was in China about two and a half years ago I happened to be invited to the British Embassy. I noticed that the cards on the table were written in the Chinese language. Such is the influence which the head of that country exercises over everyone who lives in that country. The language in which he speaks has become the language of the country for all practical purposes. If that could happen in China why should not we in India be able to do that? That is a lesson which is worth remembering.

42. No Compromise with Britain¹

The inclusion even of progressive elements in the British Cabinet² would not bring about any change in the present British policy with regard to India. Some new persons have come to power, new persons who are supposed to be more independent-minded than the former men, and who have expressed a good deal of sympathy for India's freedom.³ I do not believe that the Cabinet would be willing to accede to India's demands and hence there is no question of any compromise between the Congress and the British Government.

1. Speech at Muhammad Ali Park, Calcutta, 21 February 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 22 February 1942, and also from *The Hindustan Times*, 23 February 1942.
2. On 20 February 1942, Churchill appointed Stafford Cripps to his War Cabinet; Attlee became the Dominions Secretary and Deputy Prime Minister and Lord Beaverbrook retired from the War Cabinet.
3. On 8 February 1942, Cripps told Reuter, "In my view, the promise of Dominion Status to India should be made perfectly clear in terms Lord Balfour used in 1926, that is, that a Dominion would have the right to remain in or outside the British Commonwealth of Nations. That means the right of independence. If this right is promised after the war, then I believe that the present difficulties can be settled on that basis, and no doubt during the war India would be prepared to cooperate in the war effort, but such cooperation, I believe, is dependent on promise in clear and distinct terms."

The war is bound to bring tremendous changes in the present order. The new order may not be to your liking. Should you desire to have it according to your ideals and aspirations, you should strive for it and play your part. India, being a part of the world, cannot escape the effects of the war even if she is not invaded. The problem before you is not what you are going to do in case India is invaded. The onus of responsibility in this respect lies on the Government, but you know what kind of Government you have. Then the question is what should the people do. The statement issued by the Congress at the beginning of the war initiating its policy in this connection is in the right direction. Its first and foremost aim is the independence of India. The Congress has been expressing its opinion on the international affairs in a forceful manner for the last twelve years, and the importance of its opinion in international spheres has increased.

The war has now come near to your frontiers. The problem is whether you should strengthen the hands of your rulers in this war. The old attitude of the British Government towards India's demands still continues. That is regrettable no doubt. You must not look to any outsider for help. You must rely absolutely on your own inherent strength to achieve your independence. The pages of Indian history bear testimony to the fact how the lure of outside help has brought about India's slavery. The story of the imperialist venture of Japan and Germany is not unknown to you. Indians must stick to their own ideals even if they are difficult of achievement. But whatever happens, India will not bow down her head before any invader.

The Indian National Congress has repeatedly declared that if power is transferred to the people of this country, they will be responsible for their own defence but the British politicians are still repeating their blunders. If they had listened to the Congress two and a half years ago, the situation would have been different. We are prepared to take the responsibility even now. We may not be able to do things which we could have done before. But if that responsibility is given, we will not shirk it.

There is the immediate danger with the Japanese very near our borders. The A.R.P. work cannot be successfully carried out without the active cooperation of the public. Even in Britain the authorities have to work on popular lines before they can achieve any remarkable success. The problem is more complex in this country where there is no sympathy between the rulers and the people.

A great responsibility in this respect lies also on the people themselves. Congressmen should take up the work of service and of educating the public about certain fundamental methods of protection in case

of air raids. People should not get panicky; this will only increase their troubles.

43. Russia, China and the War¹

I must apologise for not coming on time. I have come here direct from the station. The work which I had to do in this Conference² has in fact already been done efficiently and it would not be proper for me to speak now when Shrimati Sarojini Naidu has already spoken.³ I want to lay before you some views in connection with this Conference. In fact, the organisers of this Conference have clearly explained its objectives. There are people of different views on this platform, as well as amongst you, but all of us have assembled here with a particular sympathy in our hearts. I have had sympathy with Soviet Russia for a long time. Certain things happened there which were not liked by many people but there is no reason why we should accept everything happening there blindly. Twenty-four or twenty-five years ago, when the revolution took place there, we being in bondage were naturally affected by it. The same problems of illiteracy and poverty which Russia faced are before us. Most countries today are facing the same problems though there may be slight variations. However the problems which are there in a small country like England are not there in India. We can learn something from England but our problems differ. For instance, there are great rivers here. On the one hand there are floods and on the other there is drought. Yet, we have failed to make use of the big rivers by not harnessing them for hydroelectricity and irrigation. But

1. Address at the Friends of the Soviet Conference, Lucknow, 22 February 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.
2. Jawaharlal was to inaugurate the Conference.
3. Sarojini Naidu in her presidential address paid tribute to the heroic resistance of the Russian people for their defence and deplored the attitude of imperialist nations which regarded Russia as an uncivilized nation under the iron curtain. The present war had changed the complexion and the understanding of the Soviet Union. Indians had to decide whether to become lackeys of the dying imperialist nation or to become the ancestors of tomorrow's great nation. She also paid tribute to the Chinese people.

such problems do not arise in England. There are no big rivers there; and if you look at the river on the banks of which I lived in Cambridge for three years, you will see that it is even smaller than many nullahs of Lucknow.

Russia is the biggest country in Europe, and China in Asia. So the revolution in Russia attracted our attention towards it. In Russia, as in India, there are a large number of diverse communities which differ with each other in every respect except that before the revolution they were all slaves. We can learn a lot from the manner in which the Russian Revolution solved this question. In Tazikistan, Samarkand, Bokhara and other places, only five per cent of the people were literate. But within a period of five years progress was made in all directions—education, medical health and industry. Progress cannot be made by people coming from outside, receiving fat salaries, and by opening new departments, but by a revolutionary spirit. The people of Tazikistan who were most backward in the Soviet Union have made remarkable progress.

Then war came. A formidable attack was launched by Germany on Russia. Germany concentrated her full force against Russia. There is no instance in history where any country invaded another country with such a huge force. The attack was made during the night without any warning. Russians resisted the attack. They were defeated several times. They had to fall back on many occasions. In spite of all adversities they have put up a splendid resistance which is unique in history. Uptil now no other country has been able to resist a formidable enemy for so long. Any other country subjected to such a huge attack, and defeated in so many battles, would have surrendered. But the Russians who were forced to retreat 500 miles are now advancing forward. They have extraordinary strength. They draw their strength from their socio-economic and political structure. The Russians have faced the crisis with determination and their economic structure has withstood all this calamity. All this shows that the economic structure which they have built has been instrumental in strengthening their country, raising their morale, improving their health and education and developing their industries. It is a wonderful achievement. By reading books on Russia you can know what steps they took to bring about this kind of advancement. You can take lessons from them and can learn the way in which they were able to make such a great progress and strengthen themselves.

China is also fighting a war against Japan. I came across a Chinese cook, who kept a note book in his pocket, in which he noted down the names of different countries and the number of days for which they were able to stand the attack. The names were of France, Holland,

Czechoslovakia etc. While France fell in three weeks' time, China has been fighting a strong country like Japan for four and a half years, bravely resisting their onslaughts.

When does such a thing happen? It happens only when people are free. It cannot happen in India because the people here have no hand in administration. Whatever strength we have, it cannot find an outlet. A slave country has her hands and feet tied. She cannot make progress. In the last twenty years we have succeeded in loosening our chains and have removed fear from our hearts by a novel method of nonviolence. Because of noncooperation and the civil disobedience movements we did make progress, but the progress was limited because we did not break the political and economic structure, although we advanced intellectually.

Today Russia and China have set an example of bravery and courage. We should take this lesson from them that the fight for real freedom should be infused with a spirit of courage and bravery. The questions which confront us today can be resolved if the nation becomes free and its path becomes clear. We will always be faced with new questions because the world is never free from questions, but we know one thing that the world in which we are living is coming to an end and so is the political and economic system. I hesitate to say as to what would be the next scene after the curtain has been raised, but I can say this much, that the world cannot ignore the new forces like powerful Russia. However, it is difficult to say what will happen in future.

This war has spread in the whole world but if you regard it only as a military warfare you are mistaken. If you have not understood the revolutionary forces behind this war you have not grasped the real meaning. Any nation which ignores these new forces may win the war by a powerful military force but it cannot stop another war taking place. You have to understand the revolutionary background of this war. A great change is taking place in the world today. Probably a more revolutionary period than the present one cannot be found in history.

The world has become interdependent. Countries in future can survive by mutual agreement. Just now Mrs. Naidu spoke of our respected Chinese guests who came here. Their visit has succeeded in strengthening the political relationship between China and India. I am sure that in the coming years the three countries, India, China and Russia, are going to be united in a common bond. These three countries adjoin each other and all the three are big countries. Although they are ideologically different from each other, yet they are facing the same problems. The ties between China and India are several thousand years old.

In a statement published in the papers today, Chiang Kai-shek has said, the relationship existing between India and ourselves is several thousand years old, our common boundary is 2,500 miles long, but a major war has never been fought between these two countries for the last thousand years.⁴ This is a fact worthy of our consideration. The reason seems to be that these two countries always wanted peace and wanted to preserve their respective cultures. Now we see that this bond is again becoming strong and I visualise that China, Russia and India will shortly become closely interconnected. Now I declare this Conference open, although it had started quite some time ago. I request all of you to continue it.

4. In his message to the Indian people, Chiang Kai-shek stated that both India and China had identical interests—to fight fascist countries and secure real peace for the whole world. The struggle today “is one between freedom and slavery, between light and darkness, between good and evil, between resistance and aggression.” To avoid misery and to see that civilization did not suffer, the anti-fascist front should be strengthened. He called upon Britain to give real political power to the Indians so that they might secure the required spiritual and material strength to fight the war.

44. The War Situation¹

No individual is responsible for bringing about this war, which is in fact a revolution through which the world is passing today. Hitler and Mussolini are the apparent instruments of creating it, but, in fact, the real causes are the various circumstances and problems which are the outcome of the so-called peace arrived at after the last war. The world ever since then remained in virtual disorder because these problems remained unsolved despite many an international conference held for the purpose.

One of these problems was that of unemployment and even in America there were one crore and thirty thousand youths who had no work. There was something definitely wrong in the entire structure and the unrest in the population went on developing till it took the form of war.

Such wars will continue to take place until the vital problems—economic, political and others—which have surrounded the peoples of the

1. Address to students at Dar-ul-Uloom, Lucknow, 24 February 1942. From *National Herald*, 25 February 1942.

various countries are solved. There may be a peace after the present war, but there may be another war after a few years. All nations are aware of this bitter fact but their failure to bring about a solution despite their conferences is due to the fact that none of them is willing to accept a change in the established system of its Government.

There cannot be a permanent peace unless all nations unite together and arrive at a decision, agreeable to all, for a world federation. If this is not done each nation will go on trying to compete with another and the result will be another conflict. Britain was once so advanced in industry that London used to be called the workshop of the world. But other countries could not tolerate it. They also made improvements in their industry and thus threatened the supremacy of the British Government. The mastery of the world trade is now in American hands. The British Government is now finding it difficult to defend its position.

No one expected so many British setbacks in the war. The reading of the present international situation makes one fact clear that the question of British rule in India is now out of place. Its hold on India does not seem to continue for long. But much depends on the results of the German spring offensive against Russia. Russia is too vast a land to be conquered completely and a defeat of the Russians cannot be predicted. On the other hand, in Asia, the Chinese are the only people who can check the Japanese. The Germans can be defeated only by the Russians and the Japanese by the Chinese.

None can say how long the present war will continue. But the destruction of the present form of the world is a certainty and great changes are bound to result therefrom. The new order will wipe out the economic problems, and the disparity between the rich and the poor will be eliminated.

The war has approached the Indian borders and we are bound to feel the horror of its coming but we are helpless in doing anything. We have been too crippled by the British Government to move ourselves. However, we have to do something; we have life in us and we will not allow the country to be run down by any invaders. If Indians want to get rid of the British Government, they will also not tolerate the yoke of any other foreign power. Other foreign nations, through their radios, are tempting Indians with big promises but we are not to be bluffed again. Indians do not require the help of any foreign power to get independence. Despite all our indifference to the war we cannot escape the disasters of the war. We have also to make sacrifices and face the situation, whatever it may be, courageously and boldly. Our hands are tied and we are not in power so as to do what we want, but we should have that will and determination in us which can take us successfully through

all situations that may confront us on our path to the freedom of our country. The youths of today are the leaders of tomorrow and they must prepare themselves for all eventualities.

45. Greetings to the Detenus¹

The old world totters and mighty changes are taking place before our eyes. Yet, many an old tradition of the British Government continues in India and among these is to keep detenus in prison and give them such treatment as to compel them often enough to hunger-strike. But, we may not forget our comrades and so I join in sending my greetings to them.

1. Lucknow, 24 February 1942. Message given to a rally organised on 25 February 1942 at Lucknow to protest against the Government action in not releasing the detenu prisoners. *National Herald*, 25 February 1942.

46. On Evacuees from Burma¹

Yesterday I visited the Lucknow railway station in the company of Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Mr. Newal Kishore Halvasia to meet the evacuees from Burma and elsewhere, who are passing through Lucknow on their way to the north. I was surprised to find that the railway authorities, more especially of the B.N.W.R.² and the R.K.R.,³ were paying little attention to these people.

It appears that for a long time past crowds of people, coming from Burma via Assam, have been reaching Lucknow, changing trains here, and then proceeding to Delhi or elsewhere. These people were treated with scant courtesy by the railway staff and indeed very serious complaints were made about their behaviour. Accidentally, some friends

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 24 February 1942. *National Herald*, 26 February 1942.
2. Bengal and North Western Railway.
3. Rohilkhand Kumaon Railway.

noticed this ill-treatment and tried to arrange help through the volunteers of the Agarwal Sabha. These volunteers were not allowed to function at first but ultimately a few were given passes and for the last three or four weeks, they have rendered valuable service to the evacuees by seeing that they are not imposed upon by others, by arranging for their accommodation as far as possible, and by giving them light refreshments.

Every day, from 70 to over 100 evacuees passed through Lucknow and spent many hours at the station. Owing to the efforts of the Agarwal Sabha and their volunteers, something has been achieved. But much more could be done if the railway authorities did not come in the way. I was told that the East Indian Railway authorities were, to some extent, helpful. But this could not be said for the authorities of the B.N.W.R. and R.K.R. No question of expense was involved in this but just common courtesy and good sense. But even these were lacking often enough.

I would urge upon the railway authorities, both in their interest and in the interest of the evacuees and the public, to cooperate in this matter with the volunteers who have offered their services for this selfless work. This will ease the situation and bring a small measure of comfort to the unhappy persons, who have had to leave their homes and often nearly all their belongings and are now travelling to almost unknown places.

A sufficient number of passes should be given to the volunteers who are working at the platform and receiving the evacuees. A part of the third class waiting enclosure might be set apart for these evacuees so that they could be dealt with easily. A bogey is now usually provided for them from Lucknow but sometimes difficulties are raised about it. The railway rules may be interpreted leniently for these evacuees. It would be desirable also if the bogeys are placed on the siding at least one hour before the departure of the train. If there are more than one hundred passengers, another bogey should be attached. As it is, the trains are very crowded and it is hardly possible to find room in them unless additional bogeys are attached.

There are many other small things that could be done which involve no expense and yet which would help these people.

It would be desirable, if the evacuees committee here got into touch with similar committees in Delhi and in Assam and elsewhere so that all their efforts might be coordinated.

47. To Mirza Rashid Ali Balg¹

Allahabad
February 27, 1942

Dear Rashid Ali,²

Two or three days ago Mrs. Sarojini Naidu gave me in Lucknow copies of two letters of yours to her regarding A.R.P. work. I have read these letters but I must confess that I am entirely vague as to what is intended and how it is to be done.

You suggest the formation in Bombay of a civic defence league of which membership will be open to all including the A.R.P. members. This organisation, you say, will be purely non-official and be concerned only with the safeguarding of the citizens of Bombay city.

It seems to me clear that a great city must take measures for the protection of its residents against possible calamity and people should co-operate in such measures if they are reasonable. The best organization for this purpose is that controlled by the Corporation of that city. No other organisation can easily take its place. The experience in England has been that so long as A.R.P. measures were centrally controlled, they were failures, although the Government of England is supposed to be a popular Government. They had to hand over charge to a very large extent to the Municipalities and the Corporations and only then were effective steps taken. If an air raid takes place, the dangers are (among others):

1. Panic.
2. The bursting of gas mains or water supply.
3. The dislocation of Municipal services for drainage etc.
4. Loss of life and casualties which have to be looked after.

It seems to me that the most important item of these deals completely with the Municipal services and no one else can look after them or repair them except the officers of the Corporation. It becomes essential therefore for the Corporation to be in charge of these operations. No A.R.P. authorities can do anything in the matter.

I have gone into this matter somewhat and seen various pamphlets issued by the A.R.P. people. These pamphlets as well as the work they have done so far seem to me to be entirely besides the mark. Of course

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1905-1978); Sheriff of Bombay, 1942; served in the Indian Foreign Service from 1946 to 1964.

there are useful hints in them and suggestions which should be followed. But there is a great deal of confusing and useless matter and some things which are probably not desirable at all. For my part I do not think the digging of public trenches is much good. The experience of Rangoon shows that they were worse than useless. But I cannot go into details here.

The main function of any organisation of citizens should be to prevent any panic, to explain some simple rules to be followed in case of emergency, for instance to take cover, and to make arrangements for the proper treatment of those who might be injured. Most of the other functions should be the business of the Corporation.

The whole conception of A.R.P. in India is all wrong and out of date and instead of providing much protection in case of emergency, creates the very feeling of panic that should be avoided. The blackouts in Bombay are perfectly ridiculous. Chungking was daily bombed for months and years and yet there was no continuous blackout for a night there. So also in Barcelona. Only when the alert was sounded was there a blackout. Blackouts are extremely depressing to the population, create panic, lead to road casualties and encourage goondaism and disorder. Experimental blackouts are all that are necessary.

Apart from political considerations, I would not like to be tied up with the official A.R.P. machinery which seems to me inefficient and completely out of touch with public sentiment. It failed in Rangoon. But for my part I have no objection to meeting any officials and discussing the matter with them, asking for their suggestions and giving mine to them. There are many things in which we can adopt a common line and help each other.

As for your suggested civic defence league, I do not quite know how it will shape itself. The duplication of organizations is not always helpful and the league is hardly likely to be a mass organization. Possibly a committee might serve the purpose of coordinating the activities in so far as it is possible. I understand that the Bombay Congress has also taken some steps in the matter. But what they are, I do not quite know. The real problem is a much more intricate one than just A.R.P. Situations will arise even apart from air raids which require to be dealt with to avoid panic, public disorders, food scarcity etc. All this requires careful consideration and it is difficult to deal with the matter in the course of a letter.

Your letter to Mrs. Naidu is almost a month old. I do not know what steps have been taken since then.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

48. To Bhulabhai Desai¹

Allahabad
February 28, 1942

My dear Bhulabhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter² I am sending to Rashid Ali Baig. This letter will speak for itself.

I do not know what the Bombay P.C.C. are doing in this matter, or generally in regard to controlling the situation that is arising. I read somewhere about the formation of the People's Volunteer Brigade³ under Congress auspices in Bombay. What this is and what it does I do not know. We have tried to work here on different lines and indeed have not enrolled any volunteers as such or created any volunteer brigade. We thought working from the top was not good enough. We wanted to encourage people in every small locality to help themselves in any simple self-defence organisations for each small locality, consisting of people living there and therefore most vitally interested. They can help in allaying panic, in giving a feeling of confidence and self-reliance, in helping to deal with the food situation, in giving protection if necessary and as far as possible to their neighbours, and of course in serving them when an emergency arises. We wish to avoid conflict with the Government in this as well as in the A.R.P. work and we have sought the cooperation of all the people who live in each locality regardless of their being Congressmen or not. Personally I think that this working from below will be of more help than organisation from the top, though inevitably the top has to function.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. See the preceding item.

3. At a meeting held in Bombay on 26 February 1942, it was decided to form a People's Volunteer Brigade to give protection to the citizens and serve them in times of emergency.

49. To Jagannath¹

Allahabad
March 6, 1942

My dear Jagannath,²

Thank you for your letter.³ I am afraid I cannot discuss all these matters in detail. Why should you imagine that the Congress is expecting any unworthy compromise with the British Government? I am not aware of any such thing likely to take place. Ultimately we have to think of Indian freedom and everything else is secondary. But we cannot isolate India from the rest of the world and I do think it is important that we give our moral sympathy completely to China and Russia. Their defeat will be a tragedy both from the larger point of view and from the point of view of the future of Indian freedom. We have become too obsessed with our hatred of British imperialism not to see this larger aspect. Britain is already a second class power and the British Empire cannot survive. It would be dangerous for us to allow things to happen which lead to other empires being formed. It is even more dangerous for the Indian people to think in terms of saving themselves by submission to anybody.

I do not agree with much that Rajagopalachari has been saying.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Active member of the Servants of the People Society, Lahore; later joined Delhi Cloth Mills as Labour Welfare Officer.
3. In his letter of 1 March 1942, Jagannath feared that there might be a compromise with the British. He believed that saving India would mean saving British imperialism, or helping China or Russia would weaken the Congress attitude towards the British. If the Japanese came it would be only a change of masters, and if India helped Britain it would provide moral justification to Japan and Germany to play with the lives of the Indian population. India therefore should not be a party to any compromise.

50. To Irene R. Ray¹

Allahabad
March 6, 1942

Dear Mrs. Ray,²

Your letter³ reached me in Calcutta as well as on my return to Allahabad. I am sorry I could not meet you in Calcutta.

I quite realise the nature of the perils that threaten us and the desirability of doing all we can to face them. In so far as I can do it, I am trying to turn people's attention that way. As you say, much depends on the psychological background. I discussed this matter with our friends and colleagues in Calcutta and here in my own Province we are facing it a little more concretely. As the situation is developing much will depend on local and provincial initiative and effort. I agree that in the matter of dealing with air raids etc. political considerations become irrelevant and we must all cooperate to give relief. In practice difficulties arise. For instance most of the civic services are controlled by the Municipal organisations and any other agency, including the A.R.P. agency, cannot effectively run them.

I understand that some committee has been formed in Calcutta with Dr. B.C. Roy as President. Could you discuss with him?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Wife of Dr. P.N. Ray, an associate of Dr. B.C. Roy in Calcutta.
3. In her letter of 16 February 1942, she spoke of the need for the psychological background for any large-scale movement for the nation's war-time service. This had nothing to do with politics. There was also the need to develop an effective organisation for the relief of victims in case of air raids.

51. To Anath Gopal Sen¹

Allahabad
March 6, 1942

Dear Mr. Sen,²

I have your letter.³ Thank you for warning me but after all I can only function as I see the light. I can hardly discuss myself in a letter. Nor is it easy to discuss the larger questions in a few lines. It is always difficult to separate the good from the bad because there are infinite shades of grey in between. There is no nation in the world, including India, which is devoid of evil. One has often to choose the lesser evil and to see which step is ultimately in the right direction. You may be right in thinking that I am not realist enough. And yet my own experience of so-called realists is that they cannot see the wood for the trees and therefore lose themselves in a maze of purely opportunist tactics.

I think it is absurd to say that China or Russia are helpless instruments or agents of British imperialism. Were they such agents before the Pacific War broke out and when their policy was often opposed by Britain? Or did the change suddenly come the moment Japan declared war against Britain and America? The fact is that each nation looks after its own interests and seeks help where it can to defend them.

For the last dozen years or more many of us have followed a consistent policy not only in regard to British imperialism but in regard to the growth of fascism and Nazism. Latterly some people, afraid of a Japanese victory, or expecting it, wanted to tone down that policy in so far as Japan or Germany are concerned. That may be realism, though I do not think so. But it is certainly due to a fear complex and I do not want to encourage any such tendencies in the Indian people.

So far as I am concerned, I do not want the Indian people to submit, whatever the consequences, to either British imperialism or any other imperialism, which tries to come here. Daily threats are held out through broadcasts from Tokyo and Berlin to those Indians who may oppose them. Whatever the Indians may or may not have learnt, I hope they have learnt at least not to give way to threats.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. He was at this time a lecturer in the Commerce Department of the University of Calcutta.

3. In his letter of 21 February 1942, Sen requested Jawaharlal to "know the occasional fears and misgivings which your certain mental poise and attitude and impulsive and impetuous action give rise to in the minds of many of your admirers and favourers". Jawaharlal, he warned, would lose his balance by his anti-fascist and pro-British attitude.

Britain today is already a second class power and cannot count for much in the future, whatever that may be. That of course does not mean that we should not oppose British imperialism or aggression. But that should not mean that we submit to any other aggression.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

52. To Gopinath Bardoloi¹

Allahabad
March 6, 1942

My dear Bardoloi,

Forgive me for the great delay in answering your letter of February 13th.² It was not possible of course for Marshal Chiang Kai-shek to visit Assam, though it would have been a good thing if you had met him. But his programme was not of our making and I could do little in regard to it. Anyway he could hardly be expected to discuss actual military tactics with any of us.

I quite realise the situation in Assam and a possibility of invasion and its consequence. None of us can possibly forget this. Because after all we shall ourselves be affected tremendously by what happens in Assam. The Working Committee is meeting soon in Wardha and I have no doubt that they will give every thought to these matters.

Apart from our wider policy, the fundamental thing that we have to do is to develop local self-sufficiency and self-defence from disorderly elements. This in itself helps in keeping up morale, though I realise that in Assam, owing to many outside elements, the problem is more difficult. Anyway it does not help at all in losing nerve and we shall have to face whatever comes with a stout heart.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter he informed Jawaharlal about his telegram inviting Chiang Kai-shek to visit Assam. He argued that the British were constructing roads connecting Manipur to Burma which would provoke the Japanese to attack Assam, which otherwise afforded to them no attraction. He asserted the need to prepare the Province against invasion, on lines different from nonviolent directives. He was afraid that the semi-starved plantation workers and peasantry might join the Japanese like sheep.

53. Solution Only on Basis of Freedom ¹

Question: What are your comments about the new proposals to be announced in Parliament by the British Prime Minister in a day or two, about which there has been so much speculation in the British press?²

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Indian problem can be approached only on the basis of Indian freedom. Nothing else will make a vital difference or move our millions to effective action. Until they realise that they have achieved freedom and are fighting to defend and preserve it, all else is unimportant.

The independence of India has to be recognised without any reservations, as well as the right of the Indian people to frame their own constitution without outside interference.

Q: What in your opinion should be the immediate steps?

JN: In the immediate present a provisional National Government should be formed, responsible to the Indian people and not to the Viceroy or the British Government.

Q: What about the question of minorities?

JN: The present question of minorities does not really arise in the present crisis and in any event all reasonable and possible protection should be given to them. When the Constituent Assembly meets later, it would be open to their representatives to make any proposals. There will either be agreement, or the matter may be referred to an international tribunal. Or, ultimately the problem will be solved by conflict. The risk has to be taken, for there is no other way.

The Indian princes may, for the present, be left out of consideration and not interfered with, but it is clear that they cannot continue as they are and Indian freedom will affect their position vitally.

1. Interview to the Associated Press of America, 8 March 1942. *Sind Observer*, 10 March 1942.
2. A Cabinet committee under the Deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, had completed its examination of the new proposals and Amery had met the King.

All this involves great changes and risks. It means the ending of a long-established Empire, but that Empire cannot possibly continue and the sooner this is realised the better.

Risks have to be taken. War itself is full of risks. But a friendly settlement will make a vast difference to all concerned and release tremendous forces on the side of freedom and democracy. India's sympathies are there already; the vital urge to defend a cause will then come.

Q: What is your comment on Chiang Kai-shek's visit?

JN: The Generalissimo was great and far-seeing enough to break through diplomatic precedents during his recent visit to India and seek to go down to the fundamentals. That visit was a historic one, presaging new alignments in Asia which will affect the whole world.

Q: Will the international alignments change after the war?

JN: This war is obviously something much more than a war; it is a vast revolution ending an epoch of history and ushering in an order which will be entirely different. It is in this context that the problem of India and Asia must be considered.

Western nations must realise that it is no longer possible to think in terms of empire and domination or holding on to special privileges or racial discrimination.

54. The Importance of Public Morale¹

It is necessary to create a proper atmosphere for facing the present critical situation with courage and determination. The problem of the people is much vaster than the A.R.P. proposes to cover. The experience of the A.R.P. in Rangoon has been one of utter collapse. There, wardens were the first persons to run away.

The question is one of public morale. If the morale of the people is high, much can be done. People must be made to feel that they are working in a cooperative enterprise. There should be a proper division of work. Those "overhead" committees formed by the Government are

1. Speech at K.N. Katju's residence, Allahabad, 10 March 1942. From *National Herald*, 11 March 1942.

not of much avail. The proper way is to teach people things in a simple manner and make them self-reliant. It is no use making them lose their way in a forest of rules and regulations.

I do not want that anybody should interfere in the A.R.P. work, but it is too wooden and too official to be of much use.

55. Civil Defence and Self-Sufficiency¹

From time to time I have been speaking to you from this platform on the happenings of the world. Today there would be very few individuals either in Allahabad or in the countryside who are not aware of the affairs of the world and their effect on India.

At this time the question before us is, what should we do? And I want to say something to you about it. Before telling it I want to speak to you about a prominent personality of our country who expired a few days back. Today Seth Jammalal Bajaj Day is being observed.² In this connection mass-spinning has been organised at different places. Jammalalji did valuable work in the field of politics and economics, and for Harijans and the Indian states. He took a keen interest in the uplift of women. But his main interests were spinning and khadi work. He was a good, respected old friend of ours. His demise has meant a severe blow to us, as he parted at such a critical time.

During the last twenty years big changes have taken place in India because we created an organized strength. We created an atmosphere. There may be only two to four lakhs of people whose names are registered in the Congress but the eyes of crores of Indians are looking at the Congress and that is why we took the country by storm. Whatever we may do at the present time, our organised strength is behind us. The strength that the Congress possesses is its power of organization and this is of a particular type. I wish to draw your attention towards another type of organised power which we ought to develop at the present juncture. There are many things that we could have done at the present

1. Speech at Mohammad Ali Park, Allahabad, 11 March 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

2. Jammalal Bajaj died on 11 February 1942.

moment if the reins of the Government of India had been in the hands of the public. I do not say that we would have removed all the hardships but at least we could have tried to solve the problems of the day and resisted the enemy in the event of an attack. But unfortunately even today we are being ruled by an ignorant British Government which was ignorant even earlier but has now become most worthless and stupid. It tells us every day that danger to our country is approaching nearer and nearer, and that our country is going to be invaded; as if we are not aware of these and are not distressed on account of them.

Who is responsible for the present state? After all, this is not our fault. This is the fault of the Government which is in power here. A foreign Government may rule efficiently but can it solve the big questions of the country or protect it from an external aggression? If a Government is incapable of defending the country it has no right to rule.

Do not clap for this is no occasion for it. We are in a dilemma. The path which we want to follow or the works which we want to do, we are not able to do. We cannot do so because they are the matters of administration. Suppose, we wanted to have an army to protect our country, then we would have asked every man and woman for this. We cannot protect our country only with a selected army of two, four, ten or twenty thousand people. We would have asked every individual of India, who could stand on his legs, to come forward for his country's protection. But the British Government is afraid of this, lest it increases the strength of Indians. It would not agree with our doing so. Today it is not the Government which fights a war but the people of a country fight for the sake of their freedom. The example of China is before us. The helpless Chinese are as poor as the Indians. They have neither weapons nor money. Still the most valuable cause before them is their freedom. They were attacked by the Japanese. What have Japanese forces done, within the last two and a half months, against the British Empire and America? If you look at Britain and America, which are big military countries, you will find they have got command over the seas, ships, weapons, aeroplanes and money. Yet they were driven back by the Japanese and the Germans. But these Chinese, who have got neither money nor war material, fought the Japanese not only for a year but have been fighting for the last four years. The most valuable cause they have is their freedom, for which they are fighting. Innumerable men and women fought and were killed but they checked the advance of the Japanese troops.

Even the British Empire is fighting although its position is very weak today. The British people are fighting in their own country for their freedom. When they were subjected to violent German aerial attacks they faced them bravely.

What is the Indian army today? The Indian army is a brave army consisting of the Jats, the Sikhs, the Rajputs, the Pathans, the Hindus, the Muslims and the Gurkhas. They all fight bravely. But whose orders do they carry out? This is a well-known fact. They are our brethren and they wish India's good. But after all the Indian army is not a national army. It is an army of the British Government. It is not a 'people's army' because the Government which gives them orders is not theirs.

The whole country is in distress. Everywhere you hear only this report that the Japanese army is numerically superior and it has more aeroplanes, arms and ammunition. But war is not won by raising a hue and cry. To fight a war you do need military preparations but what can the Indians do in this connection? For this purpose already there are military officers present in cities like Madras, Bombay, Delhi and Lucknow. They think that as the danger would approach India we would go to them and ask for their protection. It would be awkward for and unbecoming of us to bow down before the British Government. Whatever may happen, and let Indians and the independence of India go to hell, we will never bow down before the British or the Japanese. We will face the danger with courage and if called upon we will die. We will not disgrace ourselves, but face all dangers. We cannot leave India and go to Britain. Will you leave Allahabad and settle down in Sirsa and Handia? We will face the enemy wherever we may be. But today our hands and feet are badly tied up.

A new organisation called the A.R.P. has been formed in Allahabad. Let us hope that with the help of this organisation we will be able to protect the lives of our children and womenfolk. We should do so and protect ourselves against aerial attacks, thieves and robbers. This is our duty. The instructions to be issued in this regard from time to time should be carefully framed. This A.R.P. work, whether in Allahabad or anywhere else, can be effectively organised if it is managed by the public. About eighty thousand rupees have been spent on A.R.P. work in Allahabad. It was all spent on equipment and emoluments. Many thousand whistles, bells, charpoys have been bought. Civil defence management cannot be done by asking people to hide under charpoys. However the real question is, whose management and what sort of management would it be, and what work will the authorities of Allahabad do? I consider the A.R.P. methods and also the methods of the Government as worthless, because they are not being organised intelligently. Therefore, I cannot cooperate with these Government methods, and for this reason the Congress is not cooperating with the A.R.P. But if a fire breaks out in your house, it becomes your duty to extinguish it. Similarly it is your and our duty to give our full help

in the A.R.P. work, because fire has got to be extinguished and the public kept under control. We are not taking any regular part in the A.R.P. work. We are not becoming A.R.P. wardens, but I advise you to follow the instructions issued on behalf of the A.R.P. Suppose you are asked to put out lights, you should act accordingly. Suppose you are asked to leave the road you should do so immediately. Suppose you are warned and a signal is given to clear out from the road and enter a house, you should do it at once and take shelter in some house because in case of an air raid the persons on the road are likely to be killed. Those inside the houses can be saved.

I cannot say if Allahabad will be bombed or not, but we should be prepared for it. We should not get alarmed or panicky at the thought of being bombed because it will serve no purpose. You will not be able to save yourself, for rowdiness will cause greater harm than bombing. People think that if aeroplanes come here, the whole city will be ruined forthwith. This is quite wrong. In some cities, as in China, there have been bombing daily for months. I can say by my experience, as I have seen bombings in China and Europe, that despite daily bombings the business of those cities did not stop. When aeroplanes approached, people used to take shelter in houses, and when the aeroplanes left they again came out and resumed their businesses.

The city should be divided into small areas or units so that we are able to shoulder our responsibilities. A unit should consist of twenty or twenty-five houses and it should make its own arrangements. We should be prepared for the defence of our country and be ready for any eventuality. If any aeroplane comes, we should defend our area and render the required service. If the city is divided into small areas and the residents take the management in their own hands, any situation can be handled well. Do not hope that an army will save you from riots. During blackouts many incidents may take place and therefore it will become necessary to be on our guard. It is therefore necessary that each unit should manage ten to twenty houses. This requires cooperation. Today we have to do this work irrespective of party affiliations. You will also get instructions from the Congress from time to time. If at the time of danger we send any news, it should be possible to circulate it to every house of the city within two hours. It should not be done by beating drums, but by our selected volunteers in every *mohalla*. With such an organisation the country becomes strong enough to manage itself and defend itself from air raids. We are not forming this organisation to use it against the police or the British Government, but for protecting our people against any future eventualities.

Another important question before you is that of foodgrains. Its solution is difficult. We get our grains from villages transported by

railways which are not in our hands. We can only make efforts. This depends on railway officers and the District Magistrate. If we remain organised we can do much. But remember that a time may come when we cannot depend on articles imported from outside, whether these articles be eatables or clothing. Man cannot live without food and clothing. We should arrange for these essentials so that we are not dependent on other people. It is clear that the inhabitants of Allahabad cannot produce grain. They will have to import it from villages. We are carrying on such propaganda among peasants also. But some peasants do not produce grain. They grow commercial crops such as cotton, which cannot be eaten. Therefore they should produce grain also for their consumption. All those who have gardens should grow vegetables so that they can produce something in their own houses. In the Kew Gardens in England peas have taken the place of flowers.

It is not known how long this war will continue. It may be one or two years. The grain dealers should not exploit the situation and make undue profits, but should serve the public. Cooperative societies should be formed to get the grain distributed. But the question is of importing it from outside over which we have no control. Recently a committee of grain dealers has been formed. Ranu Babu,³ the Chairman of the Municipality, has called a meeting in the Municipal office, to form a committee of the people of the city.⁴ But remember that you should remain organised.

Today I am speaking to you in this Mohammad Ali Park but it may become difficult, even impossible, to convene a meeting after some time. Yesterday I read in the paper that loudspeakers will not be installed in any meeting for they will be used only in the A.R.P. work. We are fed up with such talks about A.R.P. The minds of our officers are occupied with such minor things. It is just possible that loudspeakers may not be available. We may have therefore to circulate the news and instructions. The Congress or any other organisation cannot take this responsibility or do this work. Every man and woman of your family has to shoulder this responsibility. The time has come when only those men and nations who stand on their own legs shall survive.

The burning topic in the newspapers these days is about the statement to be issued by Mr. Churchill about the Indian problem in a day or

3. R.N. Basu.

4. A citizen committee was formed to take steps to maintain the civic life of the city in case of any emergency.

two.⁵ Since he became Premier two years ago, he has been keeping quite silent. I, therefore, do not know what his statement will be and therefore I cannot give any opinion on it. Also my opinion is no opinion. Only the President of the Working Committee or Mahatma Gandhi can give an opinion on it. Any statement from Mr. Churchill in my opinion will not in any way lessen our present danger. Japanese or German forces are not going to come to terms by that nor are they going to withdraw. The main question which is before us has nothing to do with Mr. Churchill or the Congress. The question is whether the reins of India should be in the hands of Indians or in the hands of Englishmen. No doubt, they should be in the hands of those representatives who are elected by the people of India. Unless these changes are made, everything else is useless.

Once more I shall say, that the question which is before us today has nothing to do with Mr. Churchill or the Congress because now the war has approached our gates. You have heard that the Japanese have occupied Rangoon.⁶ Half of Burma has been occupied.⁷ In Burma there are not only British armies but also Chinese troops. They have shown great valour during the last four or five years. But what can they do? Now this war has come to the very gates of India. It is quite probable that within a few months the Japanese may attack India. Some big cities of India may be subjected to air raids. Calcutta may be bombed by the Japanese. You will then become nervous that these Japanese have come up to Calcutta. The people may flee from Calcutta and come here, and narrate stories as the evacuees from Rangoon had told you. You should not become nervous and should not keep your minds occupied with such thoughts. It is possible that bombs may be dropped over Calcutta, and you may be told such stories as may be correct. Even so, on hearing these you should not get nervous. You should rather make your organisation strong. You all should take active interest in it. Unlike the A.R.P. organisation we do not have money nor do we want to spend much. If the people of each *mohalla* do their work it will not cost much. But you should collect contributions as we need money to print handbills and do other organisational work.

5. On 11 March 1942, Churchill announced in the House of Commons the War Cabinet proposal to send Cripps to India with a declaration and for consultations with the Indian leaders for a just and final solution to the Indian problem.

6. Rangoon was occupied by the Japanese on 7 March 1942.

7. By 24 February 1942, the Japanese had forced the defenders in Burma to flee across the Sittang River, and had captured Moulmein and Pegu.

What is Japan going to do? What is Churchill going to do? If we are prepared we can face them. If we remain engrossed in our mutual differences they will destroy us. Eight difficult months are still ahead of us and it is possible that this period might be reduced to six months. I do not want to paint any rosy picture. We have to face many difficulties and hardships. It is just possible that much blood may be shed in India. A number of our people may die. How can we be saved when there is bloodshed throughout the whole world? It may probably be a test for us, because we want to become a strong nation. But so far we have learnt only one thing and that is litigation and lodging reports with the police or hurling abuses like *Bhatiyaras*. We should take a lesson from China, an old country which has been rejuvenated by joining the war. It is very probable that our old country may also get rejuvenated by getting into this war. It is possible that the war may continue and the British nation may be wiped out and even then the war may continue. We have to make our own arrangements. If war comes here we have to be prepared for it. If aeroplanes come, we have to face them and that too with bravery. We have not to bow down before anybody. When we have not bowed down before the British Empire, why should we bow down before others? To think that Japan will give us freedom or secure freedom for us is just to deceive ourselves. It is a great folly to cherish such hopes. We have seen it in our history that foreigners have never done us any good. The British people came to India and made us fight among ourselves. We did not get any benefit from them. We admit that the Japanese are Asiatics but theirs is a Big and Bloody empire. They have established their empire in China and Korea. Only fools can think they will grant independence to the Indians if they come to India. We have therefore to take any foreign nation, whether it is European or Asiatic, as our enemy if it attacks us with a view to ruling over us. We have to oppose it in every possible manner.

56. Japanese Pledge for Freedom¹

It is a dangerous tendency to think that we would like the Japanese to invade India as that at least would bring about a change of masters. It

1. Address at Katra (Bihar), 12 March 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 March, 1942.

is the mentality of a slave. India will never tolerate any power which would like to dominate and exploit its people. It is certain that we will not bow our heads before anybody whatever be the consequence. During the last several years the Congress has faced a mighty and arrogant imperialism effectively and courageously. Even though it may not be possible for India to face effectively any big military power it has its own way of facing an enemy.

It is amazing to see aggressors pledging freedom to those countries which are dominated by other countries.² But they do not give freedom to the countries which they themselves dominate and exploit. All these promises are queer and are given due to selfish motives. Indians cannot be duped by such pledges. India will fight its own battle and win its freedom.

I am genuinely pained to hear of the fall of that great country France which several times raised the flag of revolution. But this time it was a most ignoble surrender which indicated the defeat of the spirit. In India there shall be no such surrender. It does not matter if a country loses its battle, but it is very unfortunate if it loses its real spirit.

Women should realise their responsibility at this critical hour. The days are over when men were needed in India to guard them. Women should not feel helpless and be dependent all the time. It is their duty to work shoulder to shoulder with men and take up the work that is suitable to them.

The time has come for students when they can play their part effectively. It is their duty to help the people. If they undertake this duty they will be able to do it effectively and efficiently. There is no time for anyone to sit idle, and everyone has to do his duty according to his best capacity. Those who lose nerve at the time of a crisis can hardly do anything for the cause we espouse but will rather hurt it grievously. Take courage in your hands. Face the situation bravely. Organize every work effectively and do not discontinue your normal work, this is my advice to you.

2. The Japanese announced their intention to establish a "New Order" in Asia and this figured in the Tripartite Pact between Japan, Italy and Germany concluded on 9 September 1940. In December 1940, the Japanese announced their "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere" policy. On 16 February 1942, General Hedeki Tojo, the Prime Minister of Japan, appealed to Indians to get rid of the ruthless despotism of Britain: "Japan expects that India will restore its proper status as India for the Indians."

57. The Problem of Food Supplies¹

While the shaping of the larger national policies in this time of crisis fills the minds of those engaged in public affairs and the columns of newspapers, vast numbers of people are excited today about an immediate problem—that of food supplies. That problem is vitally important in itself, it is equally important for other reasons, as on its solution depends to a great extent the maintenance of an orderly administration and the absence of panic.

The Congress constructive policy today may be summed up in a few words: the organisation and maintenance of self-sufficiency and self-protection. This is essential from every point of view, whatever decisions might be taken on other issues. This is in effect not a political question on which people differ, but rather a basic need for all of us. It is for this reason that the Congress has sought to carry on this work on non-partisan lines and has invited the cooperation of all groups and individuals.

The economic crisis will inevitably deepen as the war goes on and it is essential that a planned and carefully thought-out approach be made to the problem of food supply. This requires state action as well as widespread public effort. In present circumstances, it is not easy to envisage cooperation between the state and the public or any reasoned and planned approach. Nevertheless, it is necessary for us to bear in mind what should be done and to do it to the best of our ability. We cannot just wait for events to happen.

A few days ago an important statement on the organisation of food supplies was published in the press on behalf of the Provincial Congress Committee.² This was prepared by an expert sub-committee and I would like to draw special attention to its recommendations. To a large extent I am repeating these in this note.

So far as the U.P. is concerned, the Province can meet the normal demand out of the annual normal product of all foodstuffs. In regard to some cereals for example, rice, we may not produce enough but it is possible to make up this deficiency by the use of other foodgrains.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 14 March 1942. *National Herald*, 16 March 1942.

2. The Report was published in the *National Herald* on 10 March 1942.

But this adjustment is only possible if there is planning and it is important that steps be taken soon before harvesting operations begin. Once the crop has been harvested and sold to middlemen, the situation might well get out of control. Planning, licensing of dealers, fixation of prices and inspection would be necessary.

The most important thing to be borne in mind is that the basis of purchase from the villages should be only the surplus produce, after leaving a sufficient quantity for consumption during the year and the seed requirements for the next harvest. Secondly, the prices of this surplus should be guaranteed and fixed on a wholesale basis as well as for retail purposes. Thus the state should fix the purchase price of grain in the villages and the price for the sale to consumers in urban areas. In recent years only the retail prices have been fixed and middlemen have profited thereby. Thirdly, prices should be fixed not for a few weeks at a time but six months or so, till the next harvest. This would introduce a measure of certainty, prevent the manipulation of the market by middlemen and dealings in future.

War, of course, upsets everything. Ever since it began, the prices of foodgrains have fluctuated violently though the crop yield has been fairly normal. Export of foodstuffs outside India, large government purchases for military requirements, speculative activities of middlemen, hoarding of supplies and creation of artificial scarcity of foodstuffs—all these led to these fluctuations. The cultivators did not profit by them for they had sold the grain to the middlemen at the usually low harvest prices.

An increasing difficulty is the dislocation of transport which cuts off regular supplies from some of the markets and because of which cities are the chief sufferers. We cannot expect any improvement in transport and probably there will be progressive deterioration in this. We shall thus be thrown back on self-sufficiency. It is possible that the problem of food in this Province may be aggravated in the near future by an influx of evacuees. Storm and hail have already done much damage in some parts of the Province.

To get over the difficulty of transport an attempt should be made at a regional division of the Province into units, self-sufficient in food production. Within these regions it should be easily possible to arrange for distribution, and export outside the region should not be encouraged except for special reasons. Transport within the region could be made on country carts or camels.

Every encouragement should be given to the formation of Municipal, public or consumers' cooperatives. They should be preferred to professional middlemen in the distribution of available grain supplies, and should also be given financial assistance wherever necessary and desirable.

Behind all this it is essential to have a drive for increased production of food crops. This must be done even at the cost of commercial crops. Cash and supplementary crops should be raised as also more vegetables and fruits. Seasonal fruits and vegetables like melons, water-melons, plantains, potatoes, sweet-potatoes, carrots, turnips, tomatoes, etc., would be very helpful in supplementing the staple cereals. People living in bungalows in towns and cities should utilize their spare land for the purpose. But, above all, groups of villages should form themselves into self-sufficient units and increase their food crop production. They must retain the minimum necessary for their own consumption before disposing of their produce.

All Congressmen and Congress committees must address themselves to this urgent task and carry on intensive propaganda in this behalf. But this is not a matter for Congressmen only but for all of us and the cooperation of every one should be invited.

Further, wide publicity should be given to the guaranteed price of foodstuffs. A census of bullockcarts should be taken, which can be used for purposes of transport.

The slogan of self-sufficiency in regard to food, as also of cloth and other necessities, should be carried to every corner of the Province.

Our programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection has already made good progress in some parts of the Province. It must be pushed with all vigour for that is the programme of the day and everything depends on the success we achieve in it.

Self-protection involves the division of cities and rural areas into very small units, of not more than fifty houses each. The residents of these houses undertake to cooperate together for the protection of their particular area. This is not the business of just a few volunteers but of every able-bodied man and woman. No one is asked to function outside that area. As a distinguishing mark for those who are doing this essential social work a small red and green rectangular badge to be worn on the left side of the chest has been devised. This will be available within a few days at all *Khadi Bhandars* and possibly elsewhere. I hope all our workers will obtain this and wear it, not at a particular time, but all the time. This is not meant for Congressmen only but all those who are cooperating in this great task. Hence a non-committal badge has been devised. Congressmen may wear, in addition to the above, a tricolour arm band which also will be available at *Khadi Bhandars*.

58. Racial Discrimination in Evacuation¹

During the past few weeks many of us have had occasion to meet a large number of refugees and evacuees from Malaya and Burma and strange and disturbing news has reached us.² Suffering and dislocation are inevitable in the wake of war and we have avoided giving currency to these stories. But there is one aspect of them which has hurt and angered and which is likely to have far-reaching consequences, little dreamt of by those in authority today. This is the racial discrimination that has been and is so evident and the astounding difference in the treatment given to Europeans and Indians. I am aware that this racial discrimination both in regard to evacuation and reception has been denied on behalf of the Government of India.³ But the statement and denials of the Government functioning in India have little value and few people give credence to them.

The Government has lost competence in everything and even the words used by their officials ring false. In this particular matter, it is amazing effrontery to say that there has been no racial discrimination when numerous instances of this are known to us and every day brings further stories of sorrow which authenticate the charge. We know what horror has pursued the refugees from Burma on the Akyab route to India as well as on the road via Manipur. We know what happened to Indians in Burma, Penang and Singapore. We know what is happening today in various parts of India where these evacuees are being accommodated, how every effort is being made on behalf of the Government to find luxury quarters for Europeans and hardly anyone, except some private agencies, cares for Indian families who are adrift. Recently Mr. Rajahali Jumabhoy, President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Singapore, made certain sensational disclosures about the Singapore evacuation.⁴

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 18 March 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 21 March 1942.
2. It was reported that a shorter route from Tamu to Pallel was closed for Indians, while the longer route did not have proper food and transport facilities.
3. Denying the charge of racial discrimination, L.S. Bozman, Secretary, Indian Overseas Department, conceded on 17 March 1942, that there might have been a temporary discrimination for immediate military purposes.
4. On 6 March 1942, Jumabhoy complained of the treatment given by the Dutch authorities in Palambang and Batavia and of the indifferent attitude of the British consul at Batavia. The Indians lost most of their luggage which was sunk and there were insufficient food stocks in the ship.

I have not seen any attempt at an answer to these allegations which were based on personal first-hand experience. This whole question of racial discrimination in evacuation and in the subsequent treatment of evacuees is a public scandal of the first magnitude, and those responsible for it, from the Indians Overseas Member⁵ down to the local officials, have to make answer for it. Certainly the Indian people are not going to tolerate it, war or no war, for this is a matter which affects their self-honour.

5. M.S. Ancy.

59. India's Day of Reckoning¹

I welcome the opportunity of writing in the columns of *Fortune* on the vital problems that confront India. These problems are no longer our concern only; they are of world concern, affecting the entire international situation today. More so will they affect the shaping of future events.

Whether we consider them from the point of view of the terrible world conflict that is going on, or in terms of the political, economic, and commercial consequences of this war, the future of 400 million human beings is of essential importance. These millions are no longer passive agents of others submitting with resignation to the decrees of fate. They are active, dynamic, and hungering to shoulder the burden of their own destiny and to shape it according to their own wishes.

The Indian struggle for freedom and democracy has evoked a generous response from many an American, but the crisis that faces us all is too urgent for us merely to trade in sympathy or feel benevolent towards each other. We have to consider our major problems objectively and almost impersonally and endeavour to solve them, or else these problems will certainly overwhelm us, as indeed they threaten to do. That has been the lesson of history and we forget it at our peril. It is, therefore, not merely from a humanitarian point of view, though humanitarianism

1. Article written by Jawaharlal in March 1942 on request from the editor of *Fortune* (Chicago), and cabled in full from Bombay. It was printed in its issue of March 1942.

itself is good, but rather in the objective spirit of science that we should approach our problems.

The next hundred years, it has been said, are going to be the century of America. America is undoubtedly going to play a very important role in the years and generations to come. It is young and vital and full of the spirit of growth. The small and stuffy countries of Europe, with their eternal conflicts and wars, can no longer control the world. Europe has a fine record of achievement of which it may well be proud. That achievement will endure and possibly find greater scope for development when its accompaniment of domination over others is ended.

If the next century is going to be the century of America, it is also going to be the century of Asia, a rejuvenated Asia deriving strength from its ancient culture and yet vital with the youthful spirit of modern science.

Most of us are too apt to think of Asia as backward and decadent because for nearly two hundred years it has been dominated by Europe and has suffered all the ills, material and spiritual, which subjection inevitably brings in its train. We forget the long past of Asia when politically, economically and culturally it played a dominant role. In this long perspective the past two hundred years are just a brief period that is ending, and Asia will surely emerge with new strength and vitality as it has done so often in the past.

One of the amazing phenomena of history is the way India and China have repeatedly revived after periods of decay, and how both of them have preserved the continuity of their cultural traditions through thousands of years. They have obviously had tremendous reserves of strength to draw upon. India was old when the civilization of Greece flowered so brilliantly. Between the two there was intimate contact and much in common, and India is said to have influenced Greece far more than Greece did to India. That Grecian civilization, for all its brilliance, passed away soon, leaving a great heritage, but India carried on and her culture flowered again and again. India, like China, had more staying power.

Asia is no suppliant for the favours of others, but claims perfect equality in everything and is confident of holding her own in the modern world in comradeship with others.

The recent visit of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang to India was not only of historic significance but has given us a glimpse of the future when India and China will cooperate for their own and the world's good. The Generalissimo pointed out a remarkable fact: that India and China, with a common land frontier of 3,000 kilometres, had lived at peace with each other for a thousand years, neither country playing the role of aggressor, but both having intimate cultural and

commercial contacts throughout these ages. That in itself shows the peaceful character of these two great civilizations.

Keeping this background in mind, it will be evident how unreal and fantastic is the conception of India as a kind of colonial appendage or offshoot of Britain, growing slowly to nationhood and freedom as the British dominions have done. India is a mother country, which has influenced in the past, vast sections of the human race in Asia. She still retains that storehouse of cultural vitality that has given her strength in the past, and at the same time has the natural resources, the scientific, technical, industrial and financial capacity to make her a great nation in the modern sense of the world. But she cannot grow because of the shackles that tie her down, nor can she play her part, as she should, in the war crisis today. That part can be a great one not only because of the manpower at India's disposal but because, given a chance, she can rapidly become a great industrial nation.

The World War is obviously part of a great revolution taking place throughout the world. To consider it in only military terms is to miss the real significance of what is happening. Causes lie deep, and it would be foolish to imagine that all our present troubles are due to the vanity and insatiable ambition of certain individuals or peoples. Those individuals or peoples represent evil tendencies. But they also represent the urge for change from an order that has lost stability and equilibrium and that is heartily disliked by vast numbers of people. Part of the aggressors' strength is certainly due to their challenge to this old system.

To oppose these inevitable changes and seek to perpetuate the old, or even to be passive about them, is to surrender on a revolutionary plane to the aggressor countries. Intelligent people know these aggressors are out to impose tyranny far worse than any that has existed, and therefore they should be opposed. To submit to them is to invite degradation of the worst type, a spiritual collapse far worse than even military defeat. We see what has happened in Vichy—France. We know what has happened in Central Europe and in Northern China. And yet that fear of a possible worse fate is not enough, and certainly it does not affect the masses of population who are thoroughly dissatisfied with their present lot. They want some positive deliverance to shake them out of their passivity, some cause that immediately affects them to fight for. A proud people do not accept present degradation and misery for fear that something worse may take its place.

Thus the urgent need is to give a moral and revolutionary lead to the world, to convince it that the old order has gone and a new one really based on freedom and democracy has taken its place. No promises for the future are good enough, no half-measures will help, it is the present that counts, for it is in the present that the war is going to be lost or

won, and it is out of this present that the future will take shape.

President Roosevelt has spoken eloquently about this future and about the four freedoms,² and his words have found a echo in millions of hearts. But the words are vague, and do not satisfy, and no action follows those words. The Atlantic Charter is again a pious and nebulous expression of hope, which stimulates nobody, and even this, Mr. Churchill tells us, does not apply to India.

If this urgent necessity for giving a moral and revolutionary lead were recognised and acted upon, then the aggressor nations would be forced to drop the cloak that hides many of their evil designs, and new forces of vast dimensions would rise up to check them. Even the peoples of Europe now under Nazi domination would be affected. But the greatest effect would be produced in Asia and Africa. And that may well be the turning point of the war. Only freedom and the conviction that they are fighting for their own freedom can make people fight as the Chinese and Russians have fought.

We have the long and painful heritage of European domination in Asia. Britain may believe or proclaim that she had done good to India and other Asiatic countries, but the Indians and other Asiatics think otherwise, and it is after all what we believe that matters now. It is a terribly difficult business to wipe out this past of bitterness and conflict, yet it can be done if there is a complete break from it, and the present is made entirely different. Only thus can those psychological conditions be produced that lead to cooperation in a common endeavour and release mass effort.

It was in this hope that the National Congress issued a long statement in September 1940, defining its policy in regard to the European war and inviting the British Government to declare its war aims in regard to imperialism and democracy, and, in particular, to state how these were to be given effect in the present.

For many years past the Congress had condemned fascist and Nazi doctrines and the aggressions of the Japanese, Italian and German Governments. It condemned them afresh and offered its cooperation in the struggle for freedom and democracy.

But it is stated: "If the war is to defend the *status quo* of imperialist possessions and colonies, of vested interests and privilege, then India can have nothing to do with it. If, however, the issue is democracy and world order based on democracy, then India is intensely interested in it.

2. The four freedoms laid down by Roosevelt on 6 January 1942 were, freedom of speech and worship, and freedom from want and fear. These were stated to be as the goals of the United States.

The Committee is convinced that the interests of Indian democracy do not conflict with the interests of British democracy or world democracy. But there is an inherent and ineradicable conflict between democracy for India, or elsewhere, and imperialism and fascism. If Great Britain fights for the maintenance and extension of democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism in her own possessions and establish full democracy in India, and the Indian people must have the right of self-determination to frame their own constitution through a constituent assembly without external interference and must guide their own policy. A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic cooperation."

That offer was made two and a half years ago and it has been repeated in various forms subsequently. It was rejected and rejected in a way that angered India. The British Government has made it clear beyond a doubt that it clings to the past; and present and future, in so far as Britain can help it, will resemble that past. It is not worthwhile to dwell on the tragic history of these two and a half years that have added to our problems and the complexity of the situation. Events have followed each other in furious succession all over the world and, in recent months, parts of the British Empire have passed out of England's control. And yet, in spite of all this, the old outlook and methods continue and England's statesmen talk the patronizing language of the nineteenth century to us. We are intensely interested in the defence of India from external aggression but the only way we could do anything effective about it is through mass enthusiasm and mass effort under popular control.

We cannot develop our heavy industries, even though war-time requirements shout for such developments, because British interests disapprove and fear that Indian industry might compete with them after the war. For years past Indian industrialists have tried to develop an automobile industry, aeroplane manufacture and shipbuilding—the very industries most required in war-time. The way these have been successfully obstructed is an astonishing story. I have been particularly interested in industrial problems in my capacity as Chairman of the National Planning Committee. This Committee gathered around it some of the ablest talent in India—industrial, financial, technical, economic, scientific—and tackled the whole complex and vast problem of planned and scientific development and coordination of industry, agriculture, and social services. The labours of this Committee and its numerous sub-committees would have been particularly valuable in war-time. Not only was this not taken advantage of but its work was hindered and obstructed by the Government.

Two and a half years ago we had hoped to be able to play an effective

role in the world drama. Our sympathies were all on one side, our interests coincided with these. Our principal problem is after all not the Hindu-Muslim problem, but the planned growth of industry, greater production, juster distribution, higher standards, and thus gradual elimination of the appalling poverty that crushes our people. It was possible to deal with this as part of the war effort and coordinate the two, thus making India far stronger, both materially and psychologically, to resist aggression. But it could only have been done with the driving power that freedom gives. It is not very helpful to think of these wasted years, now that immediate peril confronts us and we have to meet this peril differently now, for in no event do we propose to submit to aggression.

It is said that any transfer of power during war time involves risks. So it does. To abstain from action or change probably involves far greater risks. The aggressor nations have repeatedly shown that they have the courage to gamble with fate, and the gamble has often come off. We must take risks. One thing is certain that the present state of affairs in India is deplorable. It lacks not only popular support but also efficiency. The people who control affairs in India from Whitehall or Delhi are incapable even of understanding what is happening, much less of dealing with it.

We are told that the independence of Syria is recognised,³ that Korea is going to be a free country.⁴ But India, the classic land of modern imperialist control, must continue under British tutelage. Meanwhile daily broadcasts from Tokyo, Bangkok, Rome, and Berlin, in Hindustani announce that the Axis countries want India to be independent. Intelligent people know how false this is and are not taken in. But many who listen to this, contrast it with what the British Government says and does in India. We have seen the effect of this propaganda in Malaya and Burma. India is far more advanced politically and can, therefore, resist it more successfully. She is especially attracted to China and has admired the magnificent resistance of the Russian people. She feels friendly towards the democratic ideals of America. But with all that she feels helpless and frustrated and bitter against those who have put her in her present position.

3. On 28 September 1941, the independence and sovereignty of the Syrian Republic was promised. Syria was to be an ally of Free-France and the Allies. Independence was granted to Syria by the British on 28 October 1941.

4. On 1 March 1942, the Korean Independence Army in Chungking thanked Roosevelt for his initiative for Korean independence and promised help to the Allies and the Chinese against the Japanese. The Cairo Conference in 1943 recognised the independence of Korea.

Some of the problems are of our own making; some of British creation. But whoever may be responsible for them, we have to solve them. One of these problems, so often talked about, is the Hindu-Muslim problem. It is often forgotten that Muslims like Hindus also demand independence for India. Some of them (but only some) talk in terms of a separate state in the north-west of India. They have never defined what they mean and few people take their demand seriously, especially in these days when small states have ceased to count and must inevitably be parts of a larger federation. The Hindu-Muslim problem will be solved in terms of federation but it will be solved only when British interference with our affairs ceases. So long as there is a third party to intervene and encourage intransigent elements of either group, there will be no solution. A free India will face the problem in an entirely different setting and will, I have no doubt, solve it.

What do we want? A free, democratic, federal India willing to be associated with other countries in larger federations. In particular, India would like to have close contacts with China and Soviet Russia, both her neighbours, and America. Every conceivable protection, guarantee and help should be given to our minority groups and those that are culturally or economically backward.

What should be done now? It is not an easy question for what may be possible today becomes difficult tomorrow. But this war is not going to end soon, and what happens in India is bound to make a great difference. The grand strategy of war requires an understanding of the urges that move people to action and sacrifice for a cause. It requires sacrifice not only of lives of brave men but of factual prejudices, of inherited conceptions of political or economic domination and exploitation of others, of vested interests, of small groups that hinder the growth and development of others. It requires conception and translation into action, in so far as possible, of the new order based on the political and economic freedom of all countries, of world cooperation of free peoples, of revolutionary leadership along these lines, and of capacity to dare and face risks. What vested interests are we going to protect for years to come when the interests of humanity itself are at stake today? Where are the vested interests of Hong Kong and Singapore?

It is essential that whatever is to be done is done now. For it is the present that counts. What will happen after the war nobody knows, and to postpone anything till then is to admit bankruptcy and invite disaster.

I would suggest that the leaders of America and Britain declare: First, that every country is entitled to full freedom and to shape its own destiny, subject only to certain international requirements and their adjustment by international cooperation. Second, that this applies fully

to countries at present within the British Empire, and that India's independence is recognized as well as her right to frame her own constitution through an assembly of her elected representatives, who will also consider her future relations with Britain and other countries. Third, that all races and peoples must be treated as equal and allowed equal opportunities of growth and development. Individuals and races may and do differ, and some are culturally or intellectually more mature than others. But the door of advancement must be open to all; indeed those that are immature should receive help and encouragement. Nothing has alienated people more from the Nazis than their racial theories and the brutal application of these theories. But a similar doctrine and its application are in constant evidence in subject countries.

Such a declaration clearly means the ending of imperialism everywhere with all its dominating position and special privileges. That will be a greater blow to Nazism and fascism than any military triumph, for Nazism and fascism are an intensification of the principle of imperialism. The issue of freedom will then be clear before the world and no subterfuge or equivocation will be possible.

But the declaration, however good, is not enough, for no one believes in promises or is prepared to wait for the hereafter. Its translation into present immediate practice will be the acid test. A full changeover may not be immediately possible, yet much can be done now. In India a changeover can take place without delay and without any complicated legal enactments. The British Parliament may pass laws in regard to it or it may not. We are not particularly interested, as we want to make our own laws in the future. A provisional National Government could be formed and all real power transferred to it. This may be done even within the present structure, but it must be clearly understood that this structure will then be an unimportant covering for something that is entirely different. This National Government will not be responsible to the British Government or the Viceroy but to the people, though of course it will seek to cooperate with the British Government and its agents. When opportunity offers in the future, further changes may take place through a constituent assembly. Meanwhile it may be possible to widen the basis of the present Central Assembly to which the provisional National Government will be responsible.

If this is done in the Central Government, it would not be at all difficult to make popular governments function in the provinces where no special changes are necessary and the apparatus for them exists already.

All this is possible without upsetting too suddenly the outer framework. But it involves a tremendous and vital change, and that is just what is needed from the point of view of striking popular imagination and gaining popular support. Only a real changeover and realization

that the old system is dead past revival, that freedom has come, will galvanize the people into action. That freedom will come at a moment of dire peril and it will be terribly difficult for anyone to shoulder this tremendous responsibility. But whatever the dangers, they have to be faced and responsibility has to be shouldered.

The change suggested would give India the status of an independent nation, but a peaceful changeover presumes mutual arrangements being made between representatives of India and Great Britain for governing their future relations. I do not think that the conception of wholly sovereign independent nations is compatible with world peace or progress. But we do not want international cooperation to be just a variation of the imperial theme with some dominant nations controlling international and national policies. The old idea of Dominion Status is unlikely to remain anywhere and it is peculiarly inapplicable to India. But India will welcome association with Britain and other countries, on an equal basis, as soon as all taint of imperialism is removed.

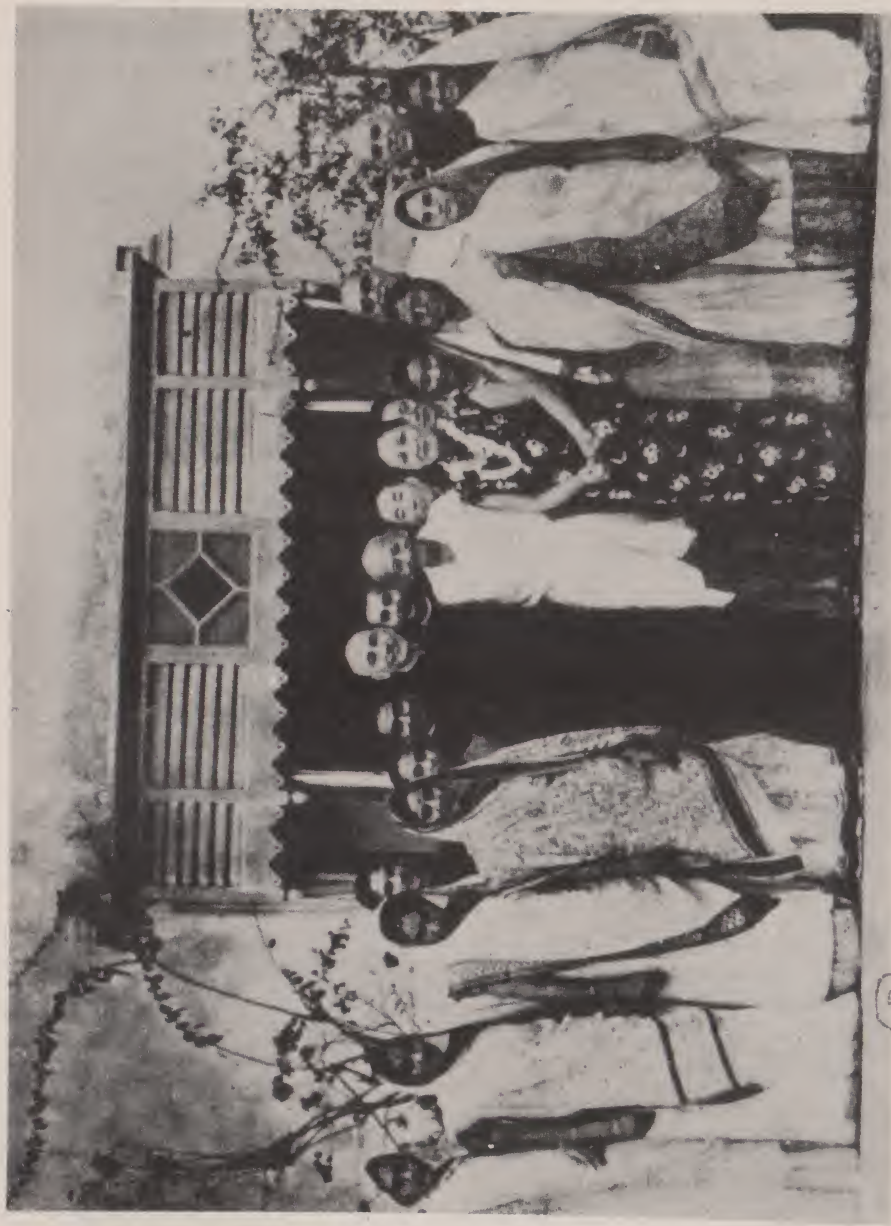
In immediate practice, after the independence of India is recognized, many old contacts will continue. The administrative machinery will largely remain, apart from individual cases, but it will be subject to such changes as will make it fit in with new conditions. The Indian army must necessarily become a national army and cease to be looked upon as a mercenary army. And future British military establishment would depend on many present and changing factors, chiefly the development of the war. It cannot continue as an alien army of occupation, as it has done in the past, but as an Allied army its position would be different.

It is clear that if the changes suggested were made, India would line up completely with the countries fighting aggression. It is difficult, however, to prophesy what steps would be most effective at this particular juncture. If the military defence of India now being carried on beyond her frontiers proves ineffective, a new and difficult military situation arises that may require other measures. Mahatma Gandhi, in common with others, has declared that we must resist aggression and not submit to any invader; but his methods of resistance, as is well known, are different. These peaceful methods seem odd in this world of brutal warfare. Yet, in certain circumstances, they may be the only alternative left to us. The main thing is that we must not submit to aggression.

One thing is certain: whatever the outcome of this war, India is going to resist every attempt at domination, and a peace that has not solved the problem of India will not be long purchase. Primarily this is Britain's responsibility, but its consequences are worldwide and affect this war. No country can, therefore, ignore India's present and her future. least of



WITH MAHATMA GANDHI AT RAMRAJATALA STATION TO RECEIVE MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK, FEBRUARY 1942



WITH MAHATMA GANDHI, CHIANG KAI-SHEK, MADAME CHIANG AND OTHERS, FEBRUARY 1942

all America on whom rests a vast burden of responsibility, and towards whom so many millions look for right leadership at this crisis in world history.

60. The Condition of Refugees¹

Ever since I issued a statement about the problem of evacuees and refugees from Burma and Malaya, I have been overwhelmed by further particulars.²

Many of these reports contain ghastly stories of miseries of Indian evacuees and racial discrimination. The spokesman of the Government of India having repeatedly denied racial discrimination, subsequently admitted such discrimination.³ What they have done since their last statement, I do not know. But there is a ceaseless stream of hundreds of people arriving daily in various centres complaining bitterly, both of racial discrimination and of utter lack of suitable evacuation arrangements. In most places, such arrangements as exist are made available to Europeans only. And Indians, rich or poor, have to shift for themselves, many dying on the way. I am told that thousands of Indians are herded together in various places *en route* from Burma to India without sufficient protection from continuous looting that has been going on ever since the exodus started. There is also a possibility of the spread

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 4 April 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 April 1942
2. It was reported in the Indian press on 25 March 1942 that Hutchings, the agent of the Government of India in Burma, used force against Indians desiring to leave Rangoon and that, before Rangoon was evacuated, the city was handed over to the military. Lunatics and prisoners set free from jails looted and raped Indian evacuees.
3. A Government press note dated 20 March 1942, in reply to Jawaharlal's statement of 18 March 1942, stated that the "Government have never stated that discrimination had not taken place...in regard to these incidents, Government have stated that they cannot condone discrimination in any form, and that, when it apparently occurs, a full enquiry should be held." Further it asserted that the Government was not giving special luxurious accommodation to Europeans. In another press note on 29 March 1942, the Government denied any discrimination and justified the closing of the shorter land route to Indians because of lack of sanitation, paucity of water and the availability of beef alone on the route.

of epidemics. Often enough special trains have been provided for European evacuees and refugees, while nothing was done for Indians.

All those people who ultimately escape to India are full of the stories of ill-treatment and racial discrimination. It can well be imagined how this kind of treatment affects the morale of the people generally, and the reactions thereon of the present Government of India.

In regard to accommodation given to refugees and evacuees in the various towns in India the Government stated that this was in the hands of local committees. This may be true, but the local committees are in the hands of district officials and their subordinates. In most places they have displayed sheer incompetence in dealing with the problem. Their partiality to European evacuees is unmistakable.

It is stated that large-scale plans for evacuees in certain large cities have already been made, and many houses and bungalows have been commandeered for them. Presumably Indians will again be left in the lurch. It must be realised that this kind of thing is going to create dissatisfaction and bitterness in the country. Every trace of racial discrimination must go or Government will have to face a situation which it will not like. For my part I am against all evacuation except in special cases and under very special circumstances. I do not like people running away from danger. I hope that our people will face whatever comes with a brave heart and render service to one another leaving it to the soft-bred and high-salaried favourites of the Government to run away to safety if they want. Our slogan is not going to be 'safety first'.

THE CRIPPS MISSION

1. To Stafford Cripps¹

Wardha
20-3-42

Sir,

During your stay in India² you will presumably consider the problem of the Indian states, and it has already been announced in the public press that representatives of the Narendra Mandal (the Chamber of Princes) will interview you and place their viewpoint before you.³ You will appreciate that this viewpoint is likely to be very different from and even entirely at variance with the viewpoint of the people living in these states.

Conditions vary greatly in these states. Some of them are extensive and well populated with considerable revenues, others are almost microscopic in size, population and revenues. Some again are relatively more advanced educationally and industrially, but the great majority of them are exceedingly backward in every respect. With hardly any exception, they are subjected to autocratic and personal rule, limited only by the intervention and more or less strict control of the Political Department of the Government of India. The people of the states have little or no voice in the governments, and civil liberty is often totally non-existent. For many years past agitation has been carried on in a large number of states for responsible government and civil liberty, and this has frequently led to tragic incidents and cruel repression, in which the Government of India or their agents have taken part.

Though conditions differ in these states, the common objective of the people in all of them is full responsible government. In the larger

1. A.I.C.C. Papers, File No. 41, 1942, N.M.M.L.

2. Winston Churchill informed the House of Commons on 11 March 1942, that the War Cabinet had unitedly agreed upon conclusions for "the present and future action in India" which they considered "a just and final solution," and that the Lord Privy Seal, Sir Stafford Cripps, would go to India to secure the assent of the Indian leaders to these proposals. Cripps arrived in India on 23 March 1942 and went back to London on 11 April 1942. He gave copies of his draft proposals to the Indian leaders on 25 March 1942, and made them public at a press conference on 29 March 1942.

3. Cripps had an interview with the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar and the Maharaja of Bikaner on 26 March and with a delegation of the Chamber of Princes on 28 March 1942. Cripps was asked about the relationship between the states, the proposed Indian Union and the British Government. He assured them that the relationship would depend upon the type of treaties they had with the Crown. The major states would be free to decide upon accession, and others would have to adjust their position and requirements with the new Union.

states this responsible government may function under the aegis of the ruler who will be then a strictly constitutional head acting through his ministers who will be responsible to the assemblies elected by the people. Most of the smaller states are far too small to exist as independent units and must therefore be absorbed in larger units, preferably the provinces.

The demand of the people in the states is for a democratic form of government with exactly the same democratic liberties as exist, or should exist, in the rest of India. They look forward to a free, united and democratic India of which these states, if large enough, are constituent units, or are parts of constituent units.

The people of the states refuse to be bound by the provisions of antiquated treaties in the making of which they had no part. These treaties were made by representatives or military commanders of the East India Company with individual rulers or others in armed possession of various areas at the time, without any reference to or consideration of the people living in these areas. At the most they represented a military and political adjustment of conditions as they existed a century and a quarter ago. These conditions have long ceased to exist in India as elsewhere, and it is manifestly absurd to attach any importance to the treaties which have petrified those conditions for so long, to the great detriment of the people.

It has been repeatedly stated by those in authority that any future order must be based on democratic freedom. That democratic freedom must necessarily apply to the Indian states. Far-seeing statesmen have also emphasized the necessity of planning for industrial and social progress. Any planning in India would be impossible if the Indian states were left out of it and remained, as they are, relics and enclaves of a completely out-of-date, autocratic and semi-feudal world. In the interests therefore not only of the people of the states, but also of Indian freedom and world freedom and planning, it is essential that the Indian states system should be liquidated and be replaced by free and democratic units of a free India.

I have endeavoured to place before you briefly the viewpoint of the people of the states as represented by the All India States People's Conference, of which I have the honour to be President. The particular point I wish to make at this stage is that it would be wrong to regard the princes as representatives of the people in their states, and that the representatives of the people of the states should have an effective voice in the disposal of their own destiny.

In case you desire to have any further information on this subject, I would request you to communicate with the General Secretary, All India

States People's Conference, Wardha, C.P. Should you wish to meet a representative of our Conference in order to discuss these problems, our Vice-President, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, has kindly agreed, at my request, to place himself at your disposal.⁴ Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya's address is Masulipatam, South India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru
President, All India States People's Conference

4. Cripps met Sitaramayya on 31 March 1942 and rejected his contention that the proposals had omitted any consideration of the states people. He refused to consider the suggestion that the British Government ask the rulers to introduce representative government. He claimed that Mahatma Gandhi agreed with him that states could not be forced into an Indian Union but he (Cripps) agreed that smaller states should be told to join the Indian Union as a prelude to the introduction of a new constitution.

2. Cripps' Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal and Maulana Azad¹

I had about two hours with these two and started by giving them the new altered draft in its final form² and then explained to Nehru the

1. Held at New Delhi on 29 March 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, (London, 1970), Volume 1, pp. 530-531.
2. His Majesty's Government's draft declaration stated that its object was the creation of a new Indian Union with Dominion Status. The constitution-making body was to have elected members from the re-elected lower Provincial Assemblies and representatives appointed by the Indian rulers. Any province, if it so decided, could refuse to join the new Union and formulate its own constitution, thereby enjoying the same status as the new Union. The treaty signed between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body was to provide safeguards for the protection of the minorities. As for defence, paragraph (e) stated, "During the critical period which now faces India and until the new constitution can be framed His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the responsibility for and retain control and direction of the defence of India as part of their world war effort, but the task of organising to the full the military, moral and material resources of India must be the responsibility of the Government of India with the cooperation of the peoples of India. His Majesty's Government desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India."

general picture which I had given to Maulana Azad the last time I saw him.³ The four points that were raised were, first, the use of the word "Dominion". I pointed out that this was not a question of substance but of phraseology and I gave the reasons why it had been put in, in order to stop objections by the House of Commons or the other Dominions. I think they attached psychological importance to this but it was in no sense a major point.

They then went on to the question of the Indian states and the representation by the states peoples. I repeated the arguments I had used to Mr. Gandhi⁴ and to Maulana Azad on a former occasion and said that if they wanted these states to come in, as apparently they did, this was the only way of inducing them.

They then passed to the non-accession point. I explained the method of deciding this in those cases where there was a 40% or more minority of the accession vote in the legislatures, that it would be referred to a plebiscite of the total adult male population. This method they seemed to accept. On the major point we had a long argument as to what the effect of the grant of the act was likely to be, and I pointed out that Nehru and other Congress leaders had said they were prepared to envisage the possibility of Pakistan and that was all the scheme was doing. They then said that they thought a scheme by which the Muslim provinces could secede after five to ten years was one that might be acceptable, and I replied that this would be a far more disruptive method of deciding the matter than doing it in the making of the constitution, and finally the argument was reduced to which was the better

3. In their interview on 28 March 1942, Cripps had clarified that it was not possible to transfer defence to an Indian Member and if the scheme failed on the issue of defence, the Congress would lose the sympathy of its British friends. On 25 March 1942, Azad had told Cripps that Congress wanted at least the appearance and name of an Indian defence minister, and thought that this would appeal to the Indian people and help in defence mobilisation efforts.
4. In their interview on 27 March 1942, Mahatma Gandhi had told Cripps that Congress might not accept the proposals because of the paragraphs dealing with the Indian states, accession or non-accession of princes, and retention of defence control in British hands. Cripps argued that any reform in the states' administrations should be preceded by an independent British India which by its influence and economic power would inevitably set up a movement for democratisation in the states; he was certain that the British administration would encourage the states towards democratisation so that they might be able to associate themselves with British India. Mahatma Gandhi agreed with Cripps that states should not be forcibly integrated but doubted that British Paramountcy would encourage a democratic movement.

method of allowing for some form of non-accession or secession, which I pointed out was essential in order to get the Muslims to agree.

We then went to the final point as regards Defence. The altered text⁵ seemed somewhat to improve the position but we went through all the same arguments again and I think I convinced them of the non-practicability of an Indian Defence Minister in the usual sense of the word.

The general attitude of Nehru, who was tired and not well, was mild and conciliatory and he left me in complete doubt as to whether Congress was more or less decided not to accept it and that it was not worth arguing or pressing for any alteration or whether he was not inclined to press his particular objections in view of the general character of the scheme and its grant of free self-government in India.

5. For the altered text of the declaration see *ante*, f.n. 2. Before amendment Paragraph (e) of the draft declaration had read: "while during the critical period which now faces India, and until the new Constitution can be formed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for the defence of India, they desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India." This was amended on the recommendation of Cripps and approved by the War Cabinet on 29 March 1942.

3. Cripps' Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal¹

Nehru came and had dinner with me and afterwards we talked for over two hours. I have never known him more serious and more worried about the Indian situation, and he was very fully conscious of the acute dangers that would arise if the Indian leaders were not to participate at the present time in the rallying of India to her own defence, but he stressed the very dangerous state of opinion arising from a multitude of causes all of which had exacerbated Indian opinion against the British.

1. Held at New Delhi on 30 March 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, (London, 1970), Volume 1, pp. 557-558.

The principal of these were, one, the treatment of Indian refugees coming from the eastern seaboard to the central districts in comparison to the treatment of the European refugees. Secondly, the growing unemployment in certain industries such as the weavers at Benares, where there was no alternative occupation either to maintain the population or to keep it quiet and orderly. Thirdly, the difficulties as to food distribution and shortage of wheat associated with rumours that we had sent Indian wheat to Persia. Fourthly, the growing disbelief in the capacity of Great Britain, to make any defence effective in the light of the happenings in Malaya and Singapore, with the consequent lack of respect for police and others in India whose power had in the past depended largely upon the uniform that they wore. Fifthly, the tendency for a reversion to sympathy for Japan which had been demonstrated widely during the Russo-Japanese war on the ground of fellow Asiatic nations, though this was moderated by the pro-Chinese feeling in India. He was afraid that these various factors would make for a general breakdown of administration and internal trouble on too large a scale to be held by British forces at the same time as they were holding the Japanese back.

He then told me of the difficulties in the Congress Working Committee and conveyed to me the impression that they would not accept the proposals, largely, I think, though he did not say so precisely, due to the influence of Gandhi. I gathered that he was doing his utmost to gain support for acceptance but felt that he was fighting a losing battle. We discussed shortly again the various points of difficulty but my general impression was that it was not so much the actual point of difficulty as the nonviolence outlook of Gandhi and his supporters on that line, which obviously is opposed to the idea of mobilising effectively the armed defence of India; and I feel fairly certain it is this aspect pointing to the undesirability of Congress leaders associating themselves in any way with the war effort which will be the decisive factor in the situation rather than any particular provision of the scheme itself. I naturally stressed to him again the hopelessness of the situation if nothing was now done and that the Congress and other nationalistic movements would lose all the support of sympathisers in other countries, anyway for the immediate present.

4. To Stafford Cripps¹

New Delhi
April 1, 1942

Dear Sir Stafford,

I have your letter of today's date,² for which I thank you.

If you so desire it, I shall gladly meet the Commander-in-Chief and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will, I hope, be able to accompany me.

My Committee have already arrived at a decision³ in regard to the proposals communicated by you to us. It was my intention to send this to you this evening, or possibly to take it over in person, in case you wished to discuss any point contained in it. This decision naturally covers other points also apart from defence. I hope to send it to you sometime today. If you wish to meet me again in regard to this I shall gladly meet you.

In your letter you refer to the 'Hindu Press.' I do not know what exactly you mean by this.⁴

Yours sincerely,
A.K. Azad

1. A.I.C.C. Papers, File No. 26, 1942, N.M.M.L. This letter written by Maulana Azad to Cripps was drafted by Jawaharlal.
2. Cripps in his letter invited Azad and Jawaharlal to meet the Commander-in-Chief, in order that "he may explain fully to you the technical difficulties of the situation and in order that you may make to him any suggestions you wish as to the division of responsibilities in this sphere of government." This was in regard to the question of defence.
3. See the following item.
4. Cripps wrote that he understood from "the Hindu Press that difficulties are still in the mind of Congress as to the question of the responsibility for the defence of India." He clarified in his letter of the same date later that he was referring to *The Hindustan Times*. This part of the letter was not included, on Cripps' request, in the British White Paper on Cripps Mission.

5. Resolution of the Congress Working Committee¹

New Delhi
April 2, 1942

The Working Committee have given their full and earnest consideration to the proposals made by the British War Cabinet in regard to India and the elucidation thereof by Sir Stafford Cripps.²

These proposals, which have been made at the very last hour because of the compulsion of events, have to be considered not only in relation to India's demand for independence, but more especially in the present grave war crisis, with a view to meeting effectively the perils and dangers that confront India and envelop the world.

The Congress has repeatedly stated, ever since the commencement of the war in September 1939, that the people of India would line themselves with the progressive forces of the world and assume full responsibility to face the new problems and shoulder the new burdens that had arisen, and it asked for the necessary conditions to enable them to do so to be created.

An essential condition was the freedom of India, for only the realisation of present freedom could light the flame which would illumine millions of hearts and move them to action.

1. Jawaharlal drafted this resolution of the Working Committee which was handed over to Cripps on 2 April 1942. It was released to the press on 11 April 1942. Jawaharlal's draft is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his press conference on 29 March 1942 and radio broadcast a day later, Cripps clarified that the status envisaged for the new Indian Union included the right of secession, by a plebiscite if necessary; that if different communities did not agree to a common constitution, "nobody in the world can stop them." The Constituent Assembly would be completely free to decide whether or not the new Indian Union would remain in the Commonwealth and it could, if it wished, start with a declaration of independence during the interim period. The responsibility for defence of India must remain with the British Government, and "it would be dishonest to say that an Indian Defence Minister would be responsible for the defence of India." He further clarified that while it was up to the Governor General to decide on the formation of the Government during the interim period "the intention of the document as far as possible, subject to the reservation of defence, is to put power in the hands of Indian leaders." While this Executive Council would have to function under the existing constitution, the Section in the Act of 1919 insisting on three service members of ten years standing being in the Council could be repealed. Conventions could be changed or new ones adopted. Cripps specifically stated that the Council could become a Cabinet. He also emphasized that the "scheme goes through as a whole or is rejected as a whole."

At the last meeting of the All India Congress Committee, after the commencement of the war in the Pacific, it was stated that: 'Only a free and independent India can be in a position to undertake the defence of the country on a national basis and be of help in the furtherance of the larger causes that are emerging from the storm of war.'

The British War Cabinet's new proposals relate principally to the future upon the cessation of hostilities.

The Committee, while recognising that self-determination for the people of India is accepted in principle in that uncertain future, regret that this is fettered and circumscribed and certain provisions have been introduced which gravely imperil the development of a free and united nation and the establishment of a democratic state.

Even the constitution-making body is so constituted that the people's right to self-determination is vitiated by the introduction of non-representative elements.

The people of India have as a whole clearly demanded full independence and the Congress has repeatedly declared that no other status except that of independence for the whole of India could be agreed to or could meet the essential requirements of the present situation.

The Committee recognise that future independence may be implicit in the proposals, but the accompanying provisions and restrictions are such that real freedom may well become an illusion. The complete ignoring of the ninety millions of the people of the Indian states and their treatment as commodities at the disposal of their rulers is a negation of both democracy and self-determination.

While the representation of an Indian state in the constitution-making body is fixed on a population basis, the people of the state have no voice in choosing those representatives, nor are they to be consulted at any stage, while decisions vitally affecting them are being taken.

Such states may in many ways become barriers to the growth of Indian freedom, enclaves where foreign authority still prevails and where the possibility of maintaining foreign armed forces has been stated to be a likely contingency, and a perpetual menace to the freedom of the people of the states as well as of the rest of India.

The acceptance beforehand of the novel principle of non-accession for a province is also a severe blow to the conception of Indian unity and an apple of discord likely to generate growing trouble in the provinces, and which may well lead to further difficulties in the way of the Indian states merging themselves in the Indian Union.

The Congress has been wedded to Indian freedom and unity and any break in that unity, especially in the modern world when people's minds

inevitably think in terms of ever larger federations, would be injurious to all concerned and exceedingly painful to contemplate.

Nevertheless the Committee cannot think in terms of compelling the people in any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against their declared and established will. While recognising this principle, the Committee feel that every effort should be made to create conditions which would help the different units in developing a common and cooperative national life. The acceptance of the principle inevitably involves that no changes should be made which result in fresh problems being created and compulsion being exercised on other substantial groups within that area. Each territorial unit should have the fullest possible autonomy within the Union, consistently with a strong national state.

The proposal now made on the part of the British War Cabinet encourages and will lead to attempts at separation at the very inception of a Union and thus create friction just when the utmost cooperation and goodwill are most needed. This proposal has been presumably made to meet a communal demand, but it will have other consequences also and lead politically reactionary and obscurantist groups among different communities to create trouble and divert public attention from the vital issues before the country.

Any proposal concerning the future of India must demand attention and scrutiny, but in today's grave crisis, it is the present that counts, and even proposals for the future are important in so far as they affect the present.

The Committee have necessarily attached the greatest importance to this aspect of the question, and on this ultimately depends what advice they should give to those who look to them for guidance.

For this the present British War Cabinet's proposals are vague and altogether incomplete, and there would appear to be no vital changes in the present structure contemplated.

It has been made clear that the defence of India will in any event remain under British control. At any time defence is a vital subject; during war-time it is all important and covers almost every sphere of life and administration; to take away defence from this sphere of responsibility at this stage is to reduce that responsibility to a farce and a nullity, and to make it perfectly clear that India is not going to be free in any way and her government is not going to function as a free and independent government during the pendency of the war.

The Committee would repeat that an essential and fundamental prerequisite for the assumption of responsibility by the Indian people in the present, is their realisation as a fact that they are free and are in charge of maintaining and defending their freedom. What is most wanted

is the enthusiastic response of the people which cannot be evoked without the fullest trust in them and the devolution of responsibility on them in the matter of defence. It is only thus that even at this grave eleventh hour it may be possible to galvanise the people of India to rise to the height of the occasion.

It is manifest that the present Government of India, as well as its provincial agencies, are lacking in competence, and are incapable of shouldering the burden of India's defence. It is only the people of India, through their popular representatives, who may shoulder this burden worthily. But that can only be done by present freedom, and full responsibility being cast upon them.

The Committee, therefore, are unable to accept the proposals put forward on behalf of the British War Cabinet.

6. Cripps' Report of His Interview with Jawaharlal and Maulana Azad¹

They brought the reply of Congress with them and gave it to me to read.² I asked them whether this meant that they decisively turned the draft document down, and they said it was the considered opinion of the Congress Working Committee but that if any change were made they would naturally reconsider their attitude to the new document.

We went through the three first points. Upon the first argument they stated that it was difficult for them to accept a document which did not speak clearly of independence in view of their long propaganda on this point.

As regards the Indian states, Nehru particularly stressed the fact that Congress had always insisted as a fundamental matter that regard must be had to the peoples of the states and not to the rulers, and that again it was very difficult for them to accept document which went against this principle completely.

So far as the non-accession point was concerned, they admitted, as their document does, that the principle of self-determination must be

1. Held at New Delhi on 2 April 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, (London, 1970), Volume I, p. 609.

2. See the preceding item.

allowed to the Muslims in some way, but said that the very definite statement in the draft document had prejudiced any more favourable solution of the problem and had made it difficult for any agreement between them and the Muslim League upon this matter; that they feared the partition of India and definitely thought that this encouraged it, and that the principle of a united India was one for which they were prepared to go to almost any length.

So far as the Defence question was concerned I did not discuss this further but we arranged that they would come and see the Commander-in-Chief as soon as an appointment could be made.

7. To Stafford Cripps¹

Thanks for your letter of today's date.² From our talk yesterday I had gathered the impression that we were likely to meet the Commander-in-Chief sometime today and we had arranged our programme accordingly, but as this is not convenient to him we shall meet him tomorrow at 6 p.m. as suggested and reach your house at 5.50 p.m. I do not think it is necessary for me to send a note about organisational details. We are interested as you know in the political aspect of the problem, the full popular control of defence as well as all other departments of administration. We consider such control essential before responsibility can be undertaken. Our views on this subject and others are embodied in the resolution I gave you yesterday and it is with that background that we should like to consider the subject of defence. Problems of higher strategy may well be controlled by inter-Allied Cabinets or Councils, but the effectual control of the defence of India should rest with the Indian National Government.

1. This letter dated New Delhi, 3 April 1942 from Maulana Azad to Stafford Cripps was drafted by Jawaharlal. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, (London, 1970), Volume I, p. 640.
2. Cripps informed Azad and Jawaharlal that they could meet the Commander-in-Chief on 4 April and stated that if they desired to raise any specific points of detail about organisation, "I should be very much obliged if you could let me have a note of them tonight or first thing in the morning so that Commander-in-Chief can consider them before the meeting."

8. Reply to American Press Comments¹

I have read with interest the comments in the American press on the proposals of the British Cabinet brought here by Sir Stafford Cripps.² These comments are obviously influenced by the urgency of events, and we appreciate that urgency ourselves. Indeed, for us, it is even more urgent than for the U.S.A. But behind these comments there is not enough appreciation of the situation in India or of the public reaction to events. It is difficult for me to deal with this matter fully at this stage as the Working Committee has decided not to release its resolution yet. We do not wish to take any step in this respect which might come in the way of Sir Stafford Cripps. Our decision, when released, will explain conclusively our viewpoints which, I believe, are shared by vast numbers of our people. The time for further elucidation will come then. I trust our friends in India and abroad will wait for its publication, whenever it may come.

The future is undoubtedly important and we may accept a proposal for that future provided it is not opposed to our interests and principles. But ultimately it is the present, with all its urgency and possibility of far-reaching consequences, that counts. The feasibility of any proposal has primarily to be judged by its application to the present as to whether it can light a fire in the people's hearts to enable them to meet the heavy trials of today and tomorrow.

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 4 April 1942. From *National Herald*, 6 April 1942.
2. Several important American papers, including the *Washington Post*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and the *New York Post*, suggested that the United States might act as a mediator or guarantor of the British promises. *The Oregon Journal* feared that if the Cripps proposals which constituted a genuine plan for independence were rejected it would jeopardise India's chances for independence. The *New York Herald*, in a leader entitled 'India Talks, Japan Acts', emphasized that the proposals, unlike the earlier promises, had the support of the people of Britain and India, and that while the Indian press complained that the American press had failed to understand the nuances of the problem, "Americans understand the essentials of the problem because they know what is freedom." There could be no freedom unless the enemies of freedom were destroyed forever. The *New York Times*, on 31 March 1942, asserted that if the proposals were refused, Indians would lose America's comradeship.

9. Interview with Louis Arthur Johnson¹

2. ***² After explaining that Nehru had sought the interview, Colonel Johnson³ said that he had suspected that Nehru believed that he, Colonel Johnson, had brought a letter from the President but there was no question of any such letter. Colonel Johnson asked me to pass on to His Excellency⁴ the main lines of his conversation with Nehru which were broadly as follows:

3. He gathered that Congress had decided not to break on the non-accession issue, partly he understood because they believed that economic factors would make non-accession impossible (Nehru may have been thinking of the 60 per cent formula⁵ which has in effect barred non-accession by the Punjab and Bengal, and of the Central subsidy to the N.W.F.P., which will of course be a strong influence against non-accession by that Province). Nehru had then gone on to speak of hitching India's wagon to America's Star and not Britain's. Colonel Johnson then told him that it was the President's determination and the determination of the American people to support Great Britain to the end of the war, to the utmost and to preserve the integrity of the British Empire and that there must be no doubt in anybody's mind in India that America would see the war through. If America was convinced that Congress was solidly supporting the war effort, the sympathy she had previously had for Congress would continue; if, on the other hand, it appeared that Congress was saving face, or hedging or taking action to slow down the conclusion of the war, it was not too much to say that America would hate Congress. Colonel Johnson added, in response to an interjection of Nehru's, that America would have the leading place at the peace table, that her attitude towards India at that table would be determined by the wholeheartedness or otherwise of the Indian war effort. If he himself were associated with the Peace Conference he

1. We are giving here extracts from an account prepared by O.K. Caroe, Secretary, External Department, Government of India, since 1939, of his talks on 6 April 1942 with Johnson about the latter's interview with Jawaharlal held at New Delhi on 5 April 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, (London, 1970), Volume I, pp. 665-666.

2. Omission in the source.

3. (1892-1956); Personal Representative of President Roosevelt to India from March-June 1942; became a personal friend of Jawaharlal; Secretary of Defence, 1949-50, in the Truman administration.

4. Lord Linlithgow.

5. See *ante*, p. 184.

would do his best to see that an India which had wholeheartedly backed the war effort obtained America's fullest support in attaining her ambitions. But the matter would be far otherwise, if at that time the American people felt that American blood had been spilt unnecessarily and the war prolonged by shilly-shallying. Nehru then spoke of his belief that India, particularly rural India, would not create a refugee problem, the villagers were rooted where they stood and would not move. He also enlarged on his belief that Indians, particularly villagers, would make fine guerillas (at this point I interjected doubts regarding the capacity of the Bengal villager for guerilla warfare and Colonel Johnson said even Nehru himself was anxious whether Bengal would stand fast against an invader).

4. Nehru had then gone on to speak of the issue regarding control of Defence, and he said that although Congress would not break on the non-accession issue, they must break if they were not satisfied on this. Colonel Johnson added that Nehru and other Congress leaders, he gathered, did not like the present Commander-in-Chief,⁶ though they expressed admiration for his predecessor.⁷ They were determined, he thought, to get a Defence Minister, but Nehru, when asked, had said that this would in no way involve interference with control of operations or in the field. The supply issue was not touched on....

6. Sir Archibald Percival Wavell.

7. Sir Alan Fleming Hartley.

10. To A. E. Foot¹

New Delhi
April 5, 1942

My dear Foot,

Your letter of the 3rd April.² It is a little difficult for me to deal with this matter as we have promised not to give publicity to our resolution yet. We have tried and we are trying to explore every possible avenue of a suitable settlement.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter Foot argued that if Jawaharlal was thinking of turning down the proposals because, with regard to defence, the proposals were inadequate, this was understandable, but should be specifically stated.

I might mention however that the three points you have raised are based on misapprehensions.

(i) It is obvious that the average Indian has no faith in British promises.³ That is natural enough. But this does not affect in any way our consideration of the present problem. The future is so uncertain that any promises made in regard to it has no great value. For my part I have no doubt about the *bona fides* of Cripps and also that a large number of Englishmen desire Indian freedom, though rather vaguely. But this is something more than a question of individual *bona fides*. National policies are determined by various forces at play and no individual can really guarantee them in advance. I should like much to happen in India but I am totally unable to guarantee it, because I do not know how far I can have my way then. However all this is beside the point and does not affect the present situation in the least.

(ii) It is true that the proposals encourage the spirit of disruption in India.⁴ As such they are harmful. In theory one cannot and one does not want to compel large groups of people to act against their will. In practice one tries to discourage such ideas and create conditions which lead to unity. For the first time official recognition is being given to the possibility of India being split up. This is bad and will lead to evil consequences, not only in the communal sphere, but also among politically reactionary groups. However, even these proposals need not be a bar to present agreement. It is the present that counts.

(iii) What Indian big business wants⁵ is not what I or my colleagues want, and their attitude has little if any influence on our decisions. So far as we are concerned, we are completely committed, whatever the future might be, regarding a settlement with Britain, to opposition to Japanese aggression and invasion in India. We will not submit to this whatever the consequences. This is the attitude I have taken up in public wherever I have spoken, and that is the attitude that the Congress as a whole is taking up. There are no doubt individuals or groups

3. Foot had stated that suspicion of Indian public opinion about British promises and imputing of motives, even to an enemy, without being certain, contravened the fundamental principles of decent human behaviour.

4. Arguing against the charge that the proposals would split India, Foot said that the Congress should be prepared to put to test its belief that Pakistan was not wanted by the majority of the provinces concerned.

5. Foot believed that Indian big business definitely did not want to displease the Japanese, as they would like to continue in their strong position in the Japanese new order. He hoped Jawaharlal and those of his way of thinking would not wish to be identified with them.

who think otherwise. But we are going to face them and oppose them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Louis Arthur Johnson¹

New Delhi
April 8, 1942

Dear Colonel Johnson,

We have given careful thought to the suggestions you have made.² May I say that we appreciate greatly the friendly interest you are taking in the attempt to solve, at least for the present, the problems that face us.

As I told you yesterday, the new proposals made by Sir Stafford Cripps on behalf of the British War Cabinet, were entirely unsatisfactory.³ Both the approach and the allocation of subjects were, in our

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. A defence formula was communicated by Johnson: "(a) The Defence Department shall be placed in charge of a representative Indian member, with the exception of functions to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief as War Member of the Executive Council. (b) A War Department will be constituted which will take over such functions of the Defence Department as are not retained by the Defence Member. A list of all the retained functions has been agreed, to which will be added further important responsibilities including the matter now dealt with by the Defence Coordination Department and other vital matters related to the defence of India."

3. In his letter of 7 April 1942 to Azad, Cripps proposed a defence formula, after taking into account the Congress Working Committee's objections and in consultation with the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief. Accordingly, the Commander-in-Chief was to retain his seat in the Viceroy's Executive Council as a War Member, and also retain his control and command of the army activities in India, subject only to the control of His Majesty's Government and the War Cabinet. An Indian representative with full powers over defence would be represented on the War Cabinet and the Pacific Council, and an Indian on the Viceroy's Executive Council would take over sections of the Defence Department which organisationally could be separated from that of Commander-in-Chief. These included public relations; demobilisation and post-war reconstruction; petroleum supply; representation on Eastern Group Supply Council; welfare of troops and their dependents; canteens; non-technical educational institutions; stationery and printing; and arrangements for foreign missions, representatives and offices. The Indian member would also take over the functions of the Defence Coordination Department then under the Viceroy, and other important functions related to defence. These included denial policy; evacuation from threatened areas; signals coordination; and economic warfare.

opinion, wrong, and there was no real transfer of responsibility for Defence to representative Indians in the National Government. Such transfer is essential for the successful defence of the country, for on it depends the full mobilization of the war-potential of the country.

The approach you have made in the draft you gave me this morning seems to us a more healthy one. With some alterations that we suggest, it might be made the basis of further discussions. But, it must be remembered, that a very great deal depends on the allocation of subjects between the Defence Department and the War Department, and until this is done, it is not possible to give a final opinion.

Leaving aside this subject of allocation for the present, we would suggest that the formula which is to form the basis of discussion should be as follows:

- (a) The Defence Department shall be placed in the charge of a representative Indian member, but certain functions relating to the conduct of the war will be exercised, for the duration of the war, by the Commander-in-Chief, who will be in control of the war activities of the armed forces in India, and who will be an extraordinary member of the National Cabinet for that purpose.
- (b) A War Department will be constituted under the Commander-in-Chief. This Department will take over such functions as are to be exercised by the Commander-in-Chief. A list of such functions has been prepared and is attached.
- (c) The Defence Member shall be in charge of all other matters relating to Defence, including those now dealt with by the Defence Coordination Department.

You will notice that this does not differ materially from your formula. The general approach is that the National Government is responsible for the entire government of the country including its defence. But, in view of the war and the obvious necessity of allowing full scope for operations to the Commander-in-Chief, functions relating to the conduct of the war are delegated to him and are to be exercised by him for the direction of the war. He will, in effect, have full control of these operations and of the war activities of the armed forces in India.

It is presumed of course that there will be full cooperation between the Defence Department and the War Department. The National Government will inevitably strain every nerve towards the successful defence of the country and will give all possible help to the Commander-in-Chief in this behalf.

Sir Stafford Cripps has already stated that a representative Indian will be a member of the War Cabinet in London, and that membership of the Pacific Council would likewise be offered to a representative Indian.

There are many other important matters which have to be considered, but I do not wish to trouble you with them at this stage. I should like to refer to them, however, in order to prevent any misapprehension later on. In the draft declaration proposed to be made by the British Government there is much with which we do not agree. The preamble commits us to Dominion Status, though there is a possibility of our voting ourselves out later on. Clauses C and D relate, *inter alia*, to the right of a province not to join the Union and to the nomination by the rulers of states' representatives to the constitution-making body. We think these provisions are bad and likely to have dangerous consequences.

We have indicated our views in regard to them in the resolution, a copy of which I have already sent you. All these provisions are for the future and they need not come in the way of a present arrangement. As controversial matter, they might be left out of any proposed declaration at this stage. It will be open to any group or party to adhere to its own opinions in regard to them and yet cooperate in a settlement for present action. We hope that it may be possible for us to arrive at a satisfactory settlement about them at a future date.

One other matter to which we attach importance might be mentioned, though it does not arise out of the present talks. We presume that the independent status of India will be recognized by the United Nations. Whenever this is done, it will greatly help our common cause and strengthen our bonds with each other.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. Reply to American Press Comments¹

I have refrained from saying much about the American press comments² on the present Indian situation. It is always difficult to judge from selected extracts through an agency which is far from impartial what American public opinion might be thinking or saying. I have looked to America with considerable admiration and goodwill. I wish her success in her present great endeavour. Nevertheless I must say that many of the American press comments have amazed me and I can only understand them on the basis of American ignorance of conditions in India. We have had long homilies and patronising advice as to what is good for us and what is not. There has been sometimes an element of threat in case we do not accept that advice. The advice of friends is always welcome and worthy of consideration. But we are not used to patronage from any country or people and we do not shape our policy on the basis of superior homilies or threats. In this world situation fraught with peril it is right that we should consult each other and find a way out to the common advantage of a common cause. But I want to make it clear that we have issued no appeals to anybody or asked for anyone's intervention. For my part I admire President Roosevelt and consider that he has been shouldering a very great burden worthily. I think he will inevitably play a great part in the future. But we have not asked for his intervention in our problems for we realise that the burden is ours and we must shoulder it. We have shouldered it against the might of a great Empire during these last twenty-two years and we have not bowed down to superior might in spite of pains and

1. Statement to the press, 9 April 1942. *National Herald*, 10 April 1942.
2. Commenting on the report that Jawaharlal had appealed to Johnson for Roosevelt's aid in considering the British proposals, the *New York Herald Tribune* on 8 April 1942 observed that it was fantastic to suppose the United States forcing Britain into decisions which Britain "believed unwise or accept the responsibility for imposing problems of India. The notion that the United States could do so tends to stultify position which Nationalist leaders themselves have claimed that India should be free to work out her own destiny without artificial hindrances or restrictions by the British. That opportunity Britain seemed categorically to promise in her latest offer, but now the objection to it is that various Indian leaders are now not asking for greater freedom to meet their own problems. Instead they seem to be insisting that the problems should be foreclosed in their favour." *The New York Times* was also sceptical of what Roosevelt could do to smooth the relations between India and Britain but added that a compromise should be reached in the interest of Indian freedom and the United Nations.

penalties. We propose to stand erect in future also whatever happens. We realise that the achievement of freedom for India, which we have desired so passionately and worked for during these long years, is our business. If we are strong enough to achieve it we shall do so. If not we shall fail. We rely ultimately on ourselves only and on no others, though the cooperation of others in a worthy task is always welcome.

Colonel Louis Johnson has taken a friendly interest in our problem of today and we are grateful to him for it. But it will be unfair to him and unfair to us to imagine that the burden of any decision or of intervention is cast upon him.

We have had sufficient experience of British statesmanship in India and elsewhere. Whatever the war may have done, there has been little difference in the tone or voice of the most eminent of the British leaders. Lord Halifax, whom we know well in India, still continues to sermonise us as of old and to tell us how insignificant we are in this great land of India.³ Perhaps so. Then why trouble about us or come to us with proposals? Lord Halifax is pleased with what his people have done here. Let him live in his complaisant world and leave us to our resources and sorrows. But whatever happens we will not give up our objective of independence and complete freedom for India. Our allegiance is to the Indian people and to no one else and in their service and for India's freedom we shall labour and if necessary die.

3. In his speech at New York Town Hall on 7 April 1942, Halifax observed that the Indian National Congress was not cooperating with the British in the war effort despite the social, economic and political advancement of India under British rule. He contended that the Congress did not represent the interests of the Muslims and of a section of the Hindus. Even the Princely states did not fit in the scheme of the Congress. He reiterated that, in order "to assume the rights and duties of full manhood among nations," and at a time of grave crisis, the Congress, the Muslim League, the Princes and the depressed classes should forge a unity and come to a broad agreement, keeping in view the interests of all the minorities.

13. To Louis Arthur Johnson¹

New Delhi
9.4.42

Dear Colonel Johnson,

I hope to let you have some time later today my Committee's reactions

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

to the changes suggested by Sir Stafford Cripps in the Defence formula.² It is felt by my colleagues that some of these changes do not improve the former draft.

There is one matter however on which I should like to have more light. It is difficult for me to grasp the full significance of the functions suggested for the War Department. The phrase used is: "The governmental relations of G.H.Q., N.H.Q. and A.H.Q." and then some further details are given in comprehensive terms. Could it be possible to give illustrative lists of departments under the War Department and the Defence Department respectively? These need not be exhaustive.

I might mention that, in any event, I do not see any reason for the inclusion in the War Department list of clause (4). I should have thought that it was the natural function of the Defence Department to act as liaison between G.H.Q. etc. and Provincial Governments etc.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. On 8 April 1942, Cripps, Johnson and Jawaharlal had a meeting at which Cripps amended the Working Committee's defence formula and showed it to Jawaharlal for suggestions. According to this formula an Indian was to be appointed in charge of Defence, but he was to delegate powers to the Commander-in-Chief as the War Member of the Executive Council who was to control the war operations and the armed forces and also be responsible to the General Head Quarters, the Naval Head Quarters and the Air Head Quarters. The Defence Member was to be in charge of all other matters in the Defence Department as well as the Defence Coordination Department; and Clause(4) stated that in the event of any new functions arising in future and in case of any dispute regarding the allocation of those functions it was to be decided by His Majesty's Government. The Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief objected strongly to the War Cabinet that they had not been consulted.

14. To Stafford Cripps¹

New Delhi
April 10, 1942

Dear Sir Stafford,

On April 2nd I sent you the resolution of the Working Committee of

1. This letter from Azad to Cripps was drafted by Jawaharlal. Printed in *The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, (London, 1970), Volume 1, pp. 726-730. Also available in J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. This letter was released to the press on 11 April 1942.

the Congress² containing their views of the tentative proposals put forward by you on behalf of the British Government.³ In this resolution we expressed our dissent from several important and far-reaching proposals for the future. Further consideration of these proposals has only strengthened us in our conviction in regard to them and we should like to repeat that we cannot accept them as suggested. The Working Committee's resolution gives expression to our conclusions relating to them, which we reached after the most earnest consideration.

That resolution however emphasized the gravity of the present situation and stated that the ultimate decision that we might take would be governed by the changes made in the present. The overriding problem before all of us, and more especially before all Indians, is the defence of the country from aggression and invasion. The future, important as it is, will depend on what happens in the next few months and years. We were therefore prepared to do without any assurances for this uncertain future, hoping that through our sacrifices in the defence of our country we would lay the solid and enduring foundations for a free and independent India. We concentrated therefore on the present.

Your original proposals in regard to the present, as contained in Clause (e)⁴ of the proposed Declaration, were vague and incomplete, except insofar as it was made clear that His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for the defence of India. These proposals in effect asked for participation in the tasks of today with a view to ensure the future freedom of India. Freedom was for an uncertain future, not for the present; and no indication was given in Clause (e) of what arrangements or governmental and other changes would be made in the present. When this vagueness was pointed out, you said that this was deliberate so as to give you freedom to determine these changes in consultation with others. In our talks you gave us to understand that you envisaged a National Government which would deal with all matters except Defence.

Defence at any time, and more particularly in war time, is of essential importance; and without it a National Government functions in a very limited field. Apart from this consideration, it was obvious that the whole purpose of your proposals and our talks centred round the urgency of the problems created by the threat of the invasion of India. The chief functions of a National Government must necessarily be to organize defence, both intensively and on the widest popular basis, and to create

2. See *ante*, pp. 188-191.

3. See *ante*, p. 183.

4. See *ante*, pp. 183 and 185.

mass psychology of resistance to an invader. Only a National Government could do that, and only a Government on whom this responsibility was laid. Popular resistance must have a national background and both the soldier and the civilian must feel that they are fighting for their country's freedom under National leadership.

We pointed this out to you. The question became one not of just satisfying our national aspirations, but of effective prosecution of the war and fighting to the last any invader who set foot on the soil of India. On general principles a National Government would control defence through a Defence Minister, and the Commander-in-Chief would control the armed forces and would have full latitude in the carrying out of operations connected with the war. An Indian National Government should have normally functioned in this way. We made it clear that the Commander-in-Chief in India would have control of the armed forces and the conduct of operations and other matters connected therewith. With a view to arriving at a settlement, we were prepared to accept certain limitations on the normal powers of the Defence Minister. We had no desire to upset in the middle of the war the present military organization or arrangements. We accepted also that the higher strategy of the war should be controlled by the War Cabinet in London, which would have an Indian member. The immediate object before us was to make the defence of India more effective, to strengthen it, to broadbase it on the popular will and to reduce all red-tape delay and inefficiency from it. There was no question of our interfering with the technical and operational sides. One thing of course was of paramount importance to us, India's safety and defence. Subject to this primary consideration there was no reason why there should be any difficulty in finding a way out of the present impasse in accordance with the unanimous desire of the Indian people, for in this matter there are no differences amongst us.

The emphasis on defence led you to reconsider the matter and you wrote to me on April 7th suggesting a formula for defence.

In this letter you said "as the Working Committee have fully understood, it is impossible to make any change in the existing constitution during the period of hostilities." The Working Committee's attitude in the matter has been completely misunderstood and I should like to clear this up. Although we are not immediately concerned with it, the Committee do not think that there is any inherent difficulty in the way of constitutional changes during the war. Everything that helps in the war not only can be but must be done with speed. That is the only way to carry on and win a war. No complicated enactments are necessary. A recognition of India's freedom and right to self-determination could easily be made if it was so wished together with certain other consequential but

important changes. The rest can be left to future arrangements and adjustments. I might remind you that the British Prime Minister actually proposed a Union of France and England on the eve of the fall of France.⁵ No greater or more fundamental change could be imagined and this was suggested at a period of grave crisis and peril. War accelerates change. It does not fit in with static conceptions.

The formula for Defence that you sent us was considered by us together with its annexure⁶ which gave a list of subjects or departments which were to be transferred to the Defence Department. This list was a revealing one as it proved that the Defence Minister would deal with relatively unimportant matters. We were unable to accept this and we informed you accordingly.

Subsequently a new formula for Defence was suggested to us but without any list of subjects.⁷ This formula seemed to us to be based on a more healthy approach and we suggested certain changes pointing out that our ultimate decision would necessarily depend on the allocation of subjects. A revised formula was then sent back to us together with an indication of the functions of the War Department.⁸ This was so widely and comprehensively framed that it was difficult for us to know what the actual allocation of subjects and departments as between the Defence Department and the War Department would be. A request was made on our behalf that illustrative lists of these subjects might be supplied to enable us to consider the matter. No such lists were supplied to us.

In the interview we had with you yesterday we discussed the new formula and expressed our viewpoint in regard to it. I need not repeat what I said then. The wording of the formula is after all a minor matter and we would not allow that to come in our way unless some important principle is at stake. But behind that wording lay certain ideas and we were surprised to find that during the past few days we had been proceeding on wrong assumptions.

When we asked you for illustrative lists of subjects for the two departments you referred us to the old list for the Defence Department which you had previously sent us and which we had been unable to accept. You added that certain residuary subjects might be added to this but in effect there was not likely to be any such subject as the allocation was complete. Thus you said that substantially there was no

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 63.

6. See *ante*, p. 197, f.n. 3.

7. See *ante*, p. 197, f.n. 2.

8. See *ante*, p. 202, f.n. 2.

change between the old list and any new one that might be prepared. If this was so and we were to go back ultimately to the place we started from then what was the purpose of our searching for new formulae, a new set of words meaning the same thing made no difference.

In the course of our talks many other matters were also cleared up. Unfortunately to our disadvantage you had referred both privately and in the course of public statements to a National Government and a Cabinet consisting of Ministers.⁹ These words have a certain significance and we had imagined that the new government would function with full powers as a Cabinet with the Viceroy acting as a constitutional head; but the new picture that you placed before us was really not very different from the old, the difference being one of degree and not of kind. The new government could neither be called, except vaguely and inaccurately, nor could it function as a National Government. It would just be the Viceroy and his Executive Council with the Viceroy having all his old powers. We did not ask for any legal changes but we did ask for definite assurances and conventions which would indicate that the new government would function as a free government, the members of which act as members of a Cabinet in a constitutional government. In regard to the conduct of the war and connected activities the Commander-in-Chief would have freedom and he would also act as War Minister. We were informed that nothing could be said at this stage even vaguely and generally about the conventions that should govern the new government and the Viceroy. This was a matter in the Viceroy's sole discretion and at a later stage it could be discussed directly with the Viceroy. Ultimately there was always the possibility of the members of the Executive Council resigning or threatening to resign if they disagreed with the Viceroy. That sanction or remedy is of course always open but it is curious that we should base our approach to a new

9. Cripps, at his press conference on 29 March 1942, had stated that the intention of the British Government was to put power in the hands of Indians, except for defence; also that new conventions could govern the deliberations of the new Executive Council which could approximate to a cabinet. In his letter to Azad on 7 April 1942, Cripps said that although the Constitution could not be changed, His Majesty's Government "were anxious to give representative Indians the maximum possible participation in the Government during that period". He also said that the civil departments would be administered "by representative members in the new National Government." Azad was given the same impression by Cripps in their interview on 25 March 1942. Linlithgow, later in his letter to Amery on 11 April 1942, confirmed that "Cripps had talked freely of a 'National Government' presided over by a Viceroy who would stand in much the same relation to it as the King does at home."

government on the probability of conflict and resignation at the very outset.

The picture therefore placed before us is not essentially different from the old one. The whole object which we and I believe you have in view, that is to create a new psychological approach to the people to make them feel that their own National Government had come, that they were defending their newly won freedom, would be completely frustrated when they saw this old picture again with even the old label on. The continuation of the India Office which has been a symbol of evil to us would confirm this picture. It has almost been taken for granted for some time past that the India Office would soon disappear, as it was an anachronism, but now we are told that even this undesirable relic of a past age is going to continue.

The picture of the government which was so like the old in all essential features is such that we cannot fit into it. Normally we would have had little difficulty in disposing of this matter for it is so far removed from all that we have striven for, but in the circumstances of today we were prepared to give full consideration to every proposal which might lead to an effective organization of the defence of India. The peril that faces India affects us more than it can possibly affect any foreigner and we are anxious and eager to do our utmost to face it and overcome it. But we cannot undertake responsibilities when we are not given the freedom and power to shoulder them effectively and when an old environment continues which hampers the national effort.

While we cannot accept the proposals you have made, we want to inform you that we are yet prepared to assume responsibility provided a truly National Government is formed. We are prepared to put aside for the present all questions about the future, though as we have indicated we hold definite views about it. But in the present the National Government must be a Cabinet Government with full power, and must not merely be a continuation of the Viceroy's Executive Council. In regard to Defence we have already stated what in our opinion the position should be. At present we feel that such an arrangement is the very minimum that is essential for the functioning of a National Government and for making the popular appeal which is urgently needed.

We would point out to you that the suggestions we have put forward are not ours only but may be considered to be the unanimous demand of the Indian people. On these matters there is no difference of opinion among various groups and parties and the difference is as between the Indian people as a whole and the British Government. Such differences as exist in India relate to constitutional changes in the future. We are agreeable to the postponement of this issue so that the largest

possible measure of unity might be achieved in the present crisis for the defence of India. It would be a tragedy that even when there is this unanimity of opinion in India the British Government should prevent a free National Government from functioning, and from serving the cause of India as well as the larger causes for which millions are suffering and dying today.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

15. Hour of Peril for India¹

In this hour of peril for India, many Indians in distant and foreign countries have cabled to me expressing their earnest desire to come back to their homeland in order to share in these perils and dangers in the defence of the motherland from all aggression and invasion.² I entirely share these sentiments and I am convinced that it is the duty of every Indian, who can do so, to return to India and face the dangers that threaten us. I trust that those in authority will facilitate this return.

Whatever the result of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, the duty of every Indian is to serve and defend India to the uttermost remains. We cannot run away from this and seek safety. What safety is there for us if India is in danger? Who lives if India perishes? India calls and every Indian man and woman must listen to that call. Let each one of us stick to his post of duty whatever befalls. Let the old and the infirm and weak of heart think in terms of evacuation and of running away from duty. There is going to be no evacuation for us from this dear country of ours or from one place to another. We hold to it till death severs the connection. May we prove worthy of her and of the glorious heritage she has handed down to us.

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 10 April 1942. *National Herald*, 11 April 1942.
2. During the weeks Cripps was in Delhi, the Japanese advance towards India continued. News about their occupation of the Andaman Islands was known on 25 March, and about British evacuation of Tanngu on 1 April, and of Prome on 3 April. Colombo was bombed on 5 April and Vizagapatam and Cocanada on 6 April and Trincomalee, the headquarters of the British fleet, on 9 April. Japanese warships were known to be at large in the Bay of Bengal and the Japanese command of the sea approaches to the Indian coast had not so far been disputed.



WITH STUDENTS AT VISVABHARATI, FEBRUARY 1942



AT INDIRA'S MARRIAGE, 26 MARCH 1942

16. To Stafford Cripps¹

New Delhi
April 11, 1942

Dear Sir Stafford,

I have just received your letter of April 10th and I must confess that my colleagues and I were considerably surprised to read it. I am sending you this reply immediately and can only deal briefly here with some of the points you have raised.

The points covered by our original resolution are important and represent my Committee's well-considered views on the British proposals as a whole.² But we pointed out to you that so far as the proposals relate to the future they might be set aside, as we were anxious to assume responsibility for India's government and defence in this hour of danger. This responsibility could only be undertaken, however, if it was real responsibility and power.

As regards the division of functions between the Defence Minister and the War Minister you did not give illustrative lists, as requested by us, and referred us to the previous list of the Defence Minister's functions, which, as you know, we had been wholly unable to accept.³ In your letter under reply you mention certain subjects, directly or indirectly related to the war, which will be administered by other departments. So far as the Defence Minister is concerned, it is clear that his functions will be limited by the first list that you sent.

No one has suggested any restrictions on the normal powers of the Commander-in-Chief.⁴ Indeed we went beyond this and were prepared to agree to further powers being given to him as War Minister. But it is clear that the British Government's conception and ours in regard to defence differ greatly. For us it means giving it a national character

1. The letter from Azad to Cripps was drafted by Jawaharlal. A.I.C.C. Papers, File No. 26, 1942, N.M.M.L. Also printed in *The Transfer of Power, 1942-7*, (London, 1970), Volume I, pp. 743-745. Released to the press on 11 April 1942.

2. Cripps had written that he would not deal with the points in the Working Committee resolution "as they were clearly not the reason for your decision".

3. This point was discussed at length in Azad's letter of 10th. See *ante*, item 14.

4. Cripps had said that "Nothing further could have been done by way of giving responsibility for Defence services to representative Indian members without jeopardising the immediate defence of India under the Commander-in-Chief. This defence is, as you know, a paramount duty and responsibility of His Majesty's Government, while unity of Command is essential in the interests of the Allied help to India."

and calling upon every man and woman in India to participate in it. It means trusting our own people and seeking their full cooperation in this great effort. The British Government's view seems to be based on an utter lack of confidence in the Indian people and in withholding real power from them. You refer to the paramount duty and responsibility of His Majesty's Government in regard to defence. That duty and responsibility cannot be discharged effectively unless the Indian people are made to have and feel their responsibility, and the recent past stands witness to this. The Government of India do not seem to realise that the war can only be fought on a popular basis.

Your statement that we have for the first time after three weeks suggested a change in the constitution is hardly correct. In the course of our talks reference was made to it, but it is true that we did not lay stress on it as we did not want to introduce new issues. But when you stated explicitly in your letter that we had agreed that no constitutional changes could be made during the war, we had to deny this and correct your impression.

It is the last part of your letter that has especially surprised and pained us.⁵ It seems that there has been a progressive deterioration in the British Government's attitude as our negotiations proceeded. What we were told in our very first talk with you is now denied or explained away. You told me then that there would be a National Government which would function as a Cabinet and that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King in England *vis-a-vis* his Cabinet. In regard to the India Office, you told me, that you were surprised that no one had so far mentioned this important matter, and that the practical course was to have this attached or incorporated with the Dominions' office.

The whole of this picture which you sketched before us has now been completely shattered by what you told us during our last interview.

You have put forward an argument in your letter which at no time during our talks was mentioned by you. You refer to the 'absolute

5. Arguing against the Congress suggestion that a truly National Government be formed like a "cabinet Government with full powers," Cripps said that "without constitutional changes of a most complicated character and on a very large scale this would not be possible." If such a system were introduced by convention, the nominated members would be responsible to themselves alone which "would in fact constitute an absolute dictatorship of the majority." This, he argued, would not be acceptable to the minorities and therefore would be inconsistent with the pledges of His Majesty's Government. "In a country such as India where communal divisions are still so deep, an irresponsible majority Government of this kind is not possible."

dictatorship of the majority.' It is astonishing that such a statement should be made in this connection and at this stage. This difficulty is inherent in any scheme of a mixed cabinet formed to meet an emergency, but there are many ways in which it can be provided for. Had you raised this question we would have discussed it and found a satisfactory solution. The whole approach to this question has been that a mixed cabinet should be formed and should cooperate together. We accepted this. We are not interested in the Congress as such gaining power, but we are interested in the Indian people as a whole having freedom and power. How the Cabinet should be formed and should function was a question which might have been considered after the main question was decided; that is, the extent of power which the British Government would give up to the Indian people. Because of this we never discussed it with you or even referred to it. Nevertheless you have raised this matter for the first time, in what is presumably your last letter to us, and tried most unjustifiably to sidetrack the real issue between us.

You will remember that in my very first talk with you, I pointed out that the communal or like questions did not arise at this stage. As soon as the British Government made up its mind to transfer real power and responsibility, the other questions could be tackled successfully by those concerned. You gave me the impression that you agreed with this approach.

We are convinced that if the British Government did not pursue a policy of encouraging disruption, all of us, to whatever party or group we belonged, would be able to come together and find a common line of action. But, unhappily, even in this grave hour of peril, the British Government is unable to give up its wrecking policy. We are driven to the conclusion that it attaches more importance to holding on to its rule in India, as long as it can, and promoting discord and disruption here with that end in view, than to an effective defence of India against the aggression and invasion that overhang it. To us, and to all Indians, the dominant consideration is the defence and safety of India, and it is by that test that we judge.

You mention that you propose to publish your letters to me. I presume that you have no objection now to our publishing our original resolution, your letters to us, and our letters to you.⁶

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

6. The correspondence as well as the Congress Working Committee resolution were released to the press on 11 April 1942.

17. To Franklin D. Roosevelt¹

New Delhi
April 12, 1942

Dear Mr. President,

I am venturing to write to you as I know that you are deeply interested in the Indian situation today and its reactions on the war. The failure of Sir Stafford Cripps's mission to bring about a settlement between the British Government and the Indian people must have distressed you, as it has distressed us. As you know we have struggled for long years for the independence of India, but the peril of today made us desire above everything else that an opportunity should be given to us to organize a real national and popular resistance to the aggressor and invader. We were convinced that the right way to do this would have been to give freedom and independence to our people and ask them to defend it. That would have lighted a spark in millions of hearts, which would have developed into a blazing fire of resistance which no aggressor could have faced successfully.

If that was not to be as we wished it and considered necessary for the purposes of the war, the least that we considered essential was the formation of a truly National Government today with power and responsibility to organize resistance on a popular basis. Unfortunately even that was not considered feasible or desirable by the British Government. I do not wish to trouble you with the details of what took place during the negotiations that have unfortunately failed for the present. You have no doubt been kept informed about them by your representatives here. I only wish to say how anxious and eager we were, and still are, to do our utmost for the defence of India and to associate ourselves with the larger causes of freedom and democracy. To us it is a tragedy that we cannot do so in the way and in the measure we would like to. We would have liked to stake everything in the defence of our country, to fight with all the strength and vitality that we possess, to count no cost and no sacrifice as too great for repelling the invader and securing freedom and independence for our country.

Our present resources may be limited, for the industrialization of our country has been hindered by the policy pursued in the past by the British Government in India. We are a disarmed people. But our war potential is very great, our manpower vast and our great spaces, as in

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 479-480.

China, would have helped us. Our production can be speeded up greatly with the cooperation of capital and labour. But all this war potential can only be utilised fully when the government of the country is intimately associated with and representative of the people. A government divorced from the people cannot get a popular response which is so essential; much less can a foreign government, which is inevitably disliked and distrusted, do so.

Danger and peril envelop us and the immediate future is darkened by the shadows of possible invasion and the horrors that would follow, as they have followed Japanese aggression in China. The failure of Sir Stafford Cripps's mission has added to the difficulties of the situation and reacted unfavourably on our people. But whatever the difficulties we shall face them with all our courage and will to resist. Though the way of our choice may be closed to us, and we are unable to associate ourselves with the activities of the British authorities in India, still we shall do our utmost not to submit to Japanese or any other aggression and invasion. We, who have struggled for so long for freedom and against an old aggression, would prefer to perish rather than submit to a new invader.

Our sympathies, as we have so often declared, are with the forces fighting against fascism and for democracy and freedom. With freedom in our own country, those sympathies could have been translated into dynamic action.

To your great country, of which you are the honoured head, we send greetings and good wishes for success. And to you, Mr. President, on whom so many all over the world look for leadership in the cause of freedom, we would add our assurances of our high regard and esteem.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. The Congress and the Cripps Offer¹

Question: Why did the Congress take a fortnight to reject the Cripps proposals? To what extent were you ready for participating

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 12 April 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 13 April 1942; from *The Hindu*, 13 April 1942; and from the *Congress Bulletin* No. 2, 1942.

in the war effort? Was it only a question of the powers of the Commander-in-Chief or was your conception of defence different from that of Cripps? Is it not true as Sir Stafford Cripps said in his broadcast yesterday that "parties and individuals vied with one another in a competition to discover the greatest number of defects", and as a result they forgot the vital part of the document—"full and free self-government for India"?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is true that we took a fortnight or more in these discussions. That surely indicates our extreme desire not to break, but to come to some kind of settlement, which is honourable.

Today the dominant factor is the imminent peril to India and I want you to appreciate what I say. We agreed to things which during the last twenty-two years we would never have dreamt of agreeing to or even coming near to them. In these twenty-two years we have stood for some objective. Not only the Congress but vast numbers of people outside the formal folds of the Congress, and all the communal organisations, have demanded independence.

For the first time in these twenty-two years, I swallowed many a bitter pill when I said I was prepared to agree to many things so as somehow to come to an agreement.

At no time it was suggested by the Congress that the normal powers of the Commander-in-Chief for carrying on the war in an effective way should be interfered with. But in addition to his powers as Commander-in-Chief, he is at present having other powers which are really those of a Defence Minister. The removal of Defence from the responsibilities of the new government made the position of the Defence Minister absurd and ridiculous.

I did want to throw all my sympathy and all the energy I possess into the organisation of the defence of India. According to my conception of the defence of India, I wanted hundreds of millions of Indians in the army. It was not a conception of just an army functioning, but of every man and woman doing something for the war, of making it a 'popular war' and of our carrying on defence even if trained armies in the field failed.

The military way is to fight as long as you can and when you feel you have lost the battle, to surrender. The conception of popular resistance is no surrender, whether the soldiers die or live. That is the conception that China has given us, and the same conception is largely seen in Russia. And that is the conception we want in India.

Our conception was one of developing a citizen army or militia. To the last moment it was not clear whether, even if we agreed to join the

government, we could develop a citizen army. What we were ultimately told was that the matter would lie within the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief and that he would not come in the way, that is, in certain circumstances the Commander-in-Chief would agree. If he did not agree, we had always the option to resign, we were told. That is not the way to bring about any arrangement or settlement.

Our whole approach was one of lighting a spark in the minds of the hundreds of millions of Indians. It was not an easy responsibility for anyone to undertake. Nevertheless we felt that circumstances demanded it and whatever our grievances with the British Government, whatever the past history of our relations, we could not allow that to come in the way of what we considered our duty to our country at present. The only thing that troubled us all the time was: Can we discharge that duty well? Can we make India hum as an organised unit of resistance making the people feel that this is their war? And for Sir Stafford to say that we are bargaining and using the language of the market-place or of a pettyfogging lawyer,² shows that Sir Stafford, I regret to say, considers, as most British statesmen consider, the whole question from the standpoint that they alone are right and those who are against them are not only in the wrong but damnably wrong — a standpoint which in this wide world is peculiar only to England and which is an indication of a singularly complaisant attitude.

Q: If, as you say, you were not bargaining with Cripps, then why did it take so long to reject the proposals?

JN: But for our great desire to reach a settlement, the talks would have broken down at an earlier stage.

At first, a certain formula was given by Sir Stafford according to which the Commander-in-Chief was to be the War Minister, and the Defence Minister was to be entrusted with certain functions. Attached to the formula was a list — practically exhaustive — of the functions to be entrusted to the Defence Minister. They were — propaganda, canteens, petroleum, amenities, stationery and subjects of that kind. These subjects were such that they would have made the Defence Minister's position ridiculous in the eyes of the public. Therefore it was not accepted by the Congress Working Committee. Then came a new formula at

2. Cripps said in his broadcast that the Congress was bargaining and that "this critical and unconstructive attitude, natural enough in the law courts or in the market-place, is not the best way of arriving at a compromise, but compromise there must be if a strong and free India is to come into being."

the instance of a third party, but presumably with Sir Stafford's approval, with no list of subjects attached.³

In the Working Committee's opinion, this afforded a basis for arriving at an agreed formula for Defence, but the real important point was — what subjects will be transferred to the Defence Minister? Sir Stafford did not reply to a letter of ours asking for a list of these subjects. At no stage did we receive that list. At this point, the Working Committee decided that carrying on correspondence was taking up too much time and that the time had come when the matter should be settled by a personal interview. It was at that stage that Maulana Azad and myself had our last interview with Sir Stafford Cripps.⁴

If you had asked me before that interview what exactly the position was, it would have been difficult for me to answer, but I would have said there was seventy-five per cent chance of an agreement coming.

In that interview we discussed the last Defence formula and other matters. And were really astonished that all the premises and assumptions, which we had in our mind for ten days and which we had been arguing, had no foundation at all. When we pressed Sir Stafford to give a list of subjects, he referred us to the Army Manual. He went into a long disquisition as to how the Indian Army became what it was today. He made it clear this was not an Indian Army at all but an outgrowth and an offshoot of the British Army, entirely controlled by the Imperial Staff in England, whose agent was the Commander-in-Chief. I tried to point out to him that whatever their present conception, it was quite essential, so far as the Indian Army was concerned, that it must be looked upon by the Indian people as a National Army. Sir Stafford's attitude was, however, rigid, and in the end he said that a list of subjects was already given with his original formula.

Sir Stafford even refused to follow the Australian model⁵ saying that Mr. Curtin⁶ in Australia had greater powers than Mr. Churchill in England. As regards the citizen army, Sir Stafford said that the matter would be within the discretion of the Commander-in-Chief, and he

3. See *ante*, p. 197.

4. The reference is to the interview held on 9 April 1942 in the evening.

5. The Australian War Cabinet consisted of the Prime Minister and the Ministers of Army and Navy, and for Supply. The Prime Minister, who was the Chairman of the War Cabinet, was also the Minister of Defence Coordination, and all major administrative decisions affecting the Army, Navy and Air Force were taken by him.

6. John Curtin (1885-1945); Member, House of Representatives of Australia, 1928-31, and 1934-45; Leader of the Opposition, 1935-41; Prime Minister of Australia, 1941-45.

hoped the Commander-in-Chief would probably agree. If he did not agree, it was open to the Minister to resign. As I said before, this was not the way to bring about a settlement.

That is not the way to fight a war — the lackadaisical way of the Viceroy's House and the Government of India. If there is a National Government, everybody will have to work or get out. It is not an evening dress war. It is work, work, work. Those who sit to dinner in evening dress at 8.15 are not going to win this war.

Q: How would you raise a citizen army without the necessary equipment?

JN: Well, I can cite the examples of China and Spain. The former is now self-sufficient so far as small arms are concerned. In India, with a National Government, we could have doubled or trebled the production of our factories. We could have sacrificed luxuries and turned those factories producing non-essential goods into factories for small arms. The whole conception of a citizen army is a practical conception, a psychological conception, an essential conception.

Recently, a person who had become a German prisoner and had managed to escape told me and others what the Germans thought of the Indian troops, how much they had been impressed by their courage and efficiency in action. The Germans said, "It is a magnificent army. What could we not do, if we had such people to draw upon? If they fight like this in a mercenary capacity, how much better they would fight if they thought they were fighting for their own freedom!" It is really a question of psychological approach.

Q: Was there any understanding about the formation of a National Government when the talks began?

JN: From the beginning, the impression which Sir Stafford had given was that the new Government would be a National Government. Sir Stafford had himself used the words "National Cabinet." He had also said that the position of the Viceroy would be analogous to that of the King, in other words, a constitutional head. The language used by Sir Stafford had led us to assume that everything was being transferred except Defence and that the Viceroy would not interfere with the decision of the Cabinet though he might have special powers such as in connection with the states or some major issues. So the question of the new government's powers was not even discussed. At the last interview on Thursday night, however, the picture which Stafford gave showed that the

premises and assumptions on which we had been arguing had no real foundation. Sir Stafford began to talk of the Viceroy's "Executive Council" and not a "National Government". Names do make a difference. If we go round the country, talking about the Viceroy's Executive Council, what would the people think? We agreed to the legal phraseology, but contrary to our old assumptions, Sir Stafford made it perfectly clear that there would be no essential change, legal or even by way of any conventions to begin with, between the position of the Viceroy's Council today and the position of the Viceroy's Council tomorrow when it came into existence.

Q: What do you think was the reason for the change in Sir Stafford's attitude?

JN: Sir Stafford might have used words and phrases in a sense different from ours, or he might have been pulled up by his 'Senior partners' in England.⁷ It was obvious that there had been some trouble between him and others, and not between him and us.⁸

We went on agreeing to proposals after proposals because of the immediate pressure of events. We even conceded that it might continue to be called the Viceroy's Executive Council and not a Cabinet, but we wanted to know the conventions that must govern the Council. Sir Stafford said he was totally unable to say anything on the subject, because it lay at the discretion of the Viceroy, and that it was for us Indians to go to the Viceroy later on and discuss the matter with him. Sir Stafford was sure that the Viceroy would take a reasonable view of it.

For the present, the whole thing boils down to this, that we agree to join the Viceroy's Council practically unconditionally, except for a very

7. The Viceroy had reacted sharply to Cripps's talking to the Indian leaders about the 'Cabinet' and the powers of the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief in the new Executive Council. The War Cabinet, on 6 April 1942, cautioned Cripps about the powers of the Viceroy-in-Council, and on 9 April 1942, asked him what he meant by his references to a National Government or the Indianisation of the new Executive Council. Cripps cabled on 10 April 1942 that he was ready to hand over the responsibility of negotiations if he was not trusted by his colleagues.
8. On 11 April 1942, Louis Johnson wrote to Franklin Roosevelt, "To my amazement when a satisfactory solution seemed certain, with unimportant concessions, Cripps with embarrassment told me that he could not change the original draft declaration without Churchill's approval and that Churchill had cabled him that he would give no approval unless Wavell and the Viceroy separately sent their own code cables unqualifiedly endorsing any change Cripps wanted. I never lost confidence until then. London wanted a Congress refusal. Why?"

vague picture of what would happen in the future. The picture he put forward to us was really the August Offer, repeated with minor changes. When I mentioned this to him he was very hurt.

Q: Sir Stafford Cripps, in his letter to Maulana Azad, dated 10 April 1942, charged that the Congress had, for the first time, asked for big changes immediately in the constitution. What have you to say to this?

JN: The reference in Azad's letter was intended only to remove a misunderstanding. In one of his letters Sir Stafford had said that the Congress had agreed that there should be no constitutional changes in the interim period. As this was not correct, the President explained the Congress stand. The Congress had merely said that it did not want to enter into an argument now on these constitutional questions, but it made no commitment of the kind that we agreed not to ask for any immediate constitutional changes. Our position was this, 'while we are not agreeing, we are not pressing this.' It is not an issue at present; Sir Stafford was not, therefore, correct in saying that a major issue had been raised.

You are all aware of the offer made by Mr. Churchill, at a critical time in the war, to France for a union with England. I only suggested that Parliament should pass a small bill of six sections giving independent status to India and agreeing to the principle of self-determination, and that other details, communal and other, could be left out for settlement later. If that had been done, the whole approach to the question would have become different — as between England and India and also between the communities. The Congress point of view was this that they were prepared to have a National Government for war purposes, but as regards the future government, they were prepared to leave for future consideration the question of detailed and precise proposals for the future government. However, the present proposals would have also to be considered from the viewpoint of the future. If the independence of India was not accepted in principle, it would have a very bad psychological effect on the people.

Q: Sir Stafford refers in his last letter of 10 April to the 'tyrannical rule of a majority' if the Congress demands had been accepted. What have you to say about this?

JN: I want to make it perfectly clear that throughout our talks and correspondence, except for the last two letters, there was no reference at

all at any stage in the slightest degree to the question of a majority rule much as we disliked it.

We accepted the idea of a composite Cabinet formed from different groups representing different ideologies in the country, some coming among others from the Muslim League, some from the Hindu Mahasabha and some from the Sikhs. We accepted that, although it was a thing which would have made the functioning of the National Government very difficult. At no stage did we discuss the number of the members from the different groups. We did not discuss it because we, speaking on behalf of the Congress, never laid stress on the Congress having this or that. We wanted no power for the Congress. We always talked in terms of what the National Government would have, whoever might be there and whatever their numbers. We talked of it as a group and what power that group should have. The communal issue in any form was never discussed except that Sir Stafford Cripps often repeated one formula, that he was only concerned with agreement between three groups in India, the British Government, the Congress and the Muslim League. He did not care whether others agreed or not, but if any of these three did not agree the scheme fell through.

For the first time this question was definitely emphasised by Sir Stafford Cripps in his letter dated April 10 in which he used the phrase 'tyrannical rule of the majority'. For an eminent lawyer and constitutionalist like Sir Stafford to use such a phrase in this manner is extraordinary. We were thinking in terms really not even of a legislature but of a Cabinet consisting of fifteen persons. What would be the proportions of the different groups in that Cabinet we never discussed. What was the harm even if there was the so-called Congress majority in it, though the Congress was not thinking on these lines. But Sir Stafford's mind was continually functioning, balancing the different communal groups. Suppose, then, in a Cabinet of fifteen there was a Congress majority of eight or nine. It was of no use because new Cabinets cannot function and do not function, especially in war time, on the basis of majority. There must be a certain homogeneity or common outlook; otherwise the Cabinet may break up. Sir Stafford had been continuously reminding us of the ultimate sanction of resignation. If we had that ultimate sanction, so also every group in that Cabinet had that ultimate sanction. So the talk of the tyranny of the majority is amazing and fantastic nonsense.

In one of his letters, Sir Stafford, while dealing with a point, mentioned that he had seen something or the other in the 'Hindu press'. When further questioned, he said he meant *The Hindustan Times*. That in

itself shows how he was continually thinking in regard to every matter in terms of Hindu and Muslim, which even Mr. Jinnah does not do.

Q: Do you think Mr. Jinnah and Dr. Savarkar would have supported the Congress proposals?

JN: I cannot conceive of Mr. Jinnah or Dr. Savarkar really disagreeing with anything that the Congress had said to Sir Stafford Cripps in regard to the proposals for the immediate present.⁹

Q: Despite all the efforts of the Congress and yours, the talks failed. Still, do you wholeheartedly support the Congress position?

JN: It was my greatest desire to find a way out and make India function effectively for defence and make the war a popular effort. So great was my desire that some things I have stood for during the last quarter of a century, and which I could never have imagined for a moment I would give up, I now agreed to give them up. I am convinced personally that it is impossible for us to agree to the proposals as they eventually emerged from the British Government's mind. I am in complete and wholehearted agreement with the Congress resolution and the letters of the Congress President.

Q: Since the British are completely involved in this international war, is it not unreasonable for the Indian leaders not to come to some compromise with the British? After all India is not the crux of the war.

JN: Today India is the crux of the war. The only other really important theatre is the Russian theatre. These are the two important theatres of war, very little else counts for the present. Much will, of course, depend in the next two or three months on the Russo-German war, a great deal will depend in India on what happens as between Germany and Russia. But apart from that India is going to be for the next three

9. Savarkar, in reply to Stafford Cripps's telegram of 9 April 1942, stated that if "a National Government is to be formed for the period of the War for carrying on the War effectively in the defence of India, then the Hindu Mahasabha will have no hesitation in joining such a National Government," provided it did not bind the Hindu Mahasabha to accept the other provisions of the declaration. Jinnah told Cripps on 25 March 1942 that the Muslim League would join the National Government provided the Viceroy would treat the Council as a Cabinet.

or four months the crux of the war. It will make a difference to the length of the war and the intensity of the war. Because of that every country in the world realises the importance of India except, of course, the big people in New Delhi and Whitehall — they are slow of understanding and comprehension — and therefore you have these frantic radio appeals from Germany and Japan.

Every party knows that India can function effectively only if the Indian people function effectively. It does not matter how hard a few brass-hats work. If today a National Government in India said, "We are going to arm the Indian people, we may not have the best of the modern arms, aeroplanes, tanks, but we are going to arm them with such guns as we can have", think how the world situation will change, what reactions it will have in Germany and Japan and also in the Allied countries!

Q: Would the breakdown of the talks in New Delhi make a difference to the Congress attitude of non-embarrassment of the British?

JN: Naturally, the public reaction in India to the breakdown will be one of irritation against the British Government; nevertheless the issues before the country are so grave that no responsible person can talk lightly about them or just consider them in terms of bitter reactions to events. We cannot afford to be bitter because bitterness clouds the mind and affects the judgment at a moment of grave crisis.

The fundamental factor is not what the British Government does to us or what we do to it although that is very important; the fundamental factor is the peril to India and what we are going to do about it. Therefore, certainly, in spite of all that has happened, we are not going to embarrass the British war effort in India or the effort of our American friends, who may come here. We want production to go on full speed ahead. We want the people to hold to their jobs and not run away from them. We cannot participate in Britain's war effort, and therefore the problem before us is that without participating in that war effort and without embarrassing it, how to organise our own war effort on our own basis of a free and independent India. I hope the A.I.C.C., at its meeting in a fortnight's time, will consider this problem and tell us what to do about it.

Q: How do you think India can defend itself?

JN: Only the state can defend a country. We are not in the state. We cannot raise a citizen army. Nevertheless, since this crisis came

before us, we have started an intensified programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection. It is an attempt to organise rural areas as well as urban areas as far as possible, possibly more in respect of food and cloth, because transport is failing us. We started this programme so that we could build up regional self-sufficient units, which could carry on, even though rail and motor transport failed.

Naturally these units cannot resist an invading army. But they form the background of any resistance that the state or we might organise. They can help by preventing disorder, increasing production and preventing panic from spreading, and in future, they might become the reservoir from which more efficient units of resistance might be drawn and trained. If we were in the Government, we could have immediately approached the problem in that way. But today if we make an attempt in that direction, we would meet, not with Japanese but British resistance. If the Government of India is wise enough, it should not come in our way in developing this movement. It is not a movement to break laws. It is a movement which indirectly helps the war effort.

I cannot tolerate the idea that I should sit idle, or the people should sit idle in their houses, while the battle for India is being fought between foreign armies, and the Japanese are invading the country. How we can function depends on changing circumstances. In the actual area of invasion we might function in one way and in another area in a different way. But the background will be the same, that is, we are not going to surrender to the invader. Just as we have not given in to the British during the last twenty-two years, in the same way we are certainly not going to give in to a foreign invader. I want to fight this idea that we must remain passive, that we cannot do anything against the Japanese invader, that the one is really as good or as bad as the other. I cannot tolerate these conceptions. I am not going to give in to Britain if it wants to exploit or rule over India. Much less do I want the Indian people to give in or be passive to the Japanese. I want them to resist the Japanese to the uttermost, resist them in the Congress way, which is open to us, and which can be applied by a large population, that is, not giving supplies and embarrassing them in every way that a widely spread population can. Remember that an invading army after all operates in a limited area. On its right and left flanks it comes into touch with the local population. Over wide areas no army is present.

It is our duty and the Congressmen's duty and the duty of all other persons to carry out this programme of self-protection and self-sufficiency to the utmost. May be we have to take up guerilla warfare. I don't know what the Congress will decide. But it is this foundation,

and this organisation that we are building up, that will ultimately help us to meet the present situation. My general advice is: Do not submit or surrender, do not give supplies, noncooperate with the aggressor, embarrass him in every way. Fighting will be done by the armed forces.

There is a difference in the approach to the resistance we have been offering to the British in India and our approach to the resistance to a new invader. We submit to neither, of course; but as you know, for the last two and a half years we have expressed our sympathy with certain larger causes; we have expressed our intense antipathy to fascism and Nazism, to what the Japanese have done in China and Manchuria. And so far as our foreign outlook is concerned, during the last many years we have followed a definite line that influences us immediately in regard to our attitude to this war. Before the war we criticised the policy of appeasement in Munich. That outlook governs us today also. I do feel definitely that it would be a tragedy for the world if Germany and Japan won this war and dominated the world. I don't want that to happen. I would have liked to play my part in this world drama more effectively. That was why I went to the utmost limit to come to terms with the British Government.

Our policy as laid down by Mahatma Gandhi and others was not one of causing embarrassment except psychological embarrassment. If our approach had not been one of sympathy, our attitude would have been one of direct embarrassment and we could have broken the whole war effort in India, both in regard to production and in regard to the army proper. We did not do that because of wider sympathy for the larger cause; while we wanted to dissociate ourselves from the activities of the British Government, we did not want to embarrass them.

In regard to the Japanese invasion, we are out to embarrass them to the utmost because there is a difference between a new invasion and an old invasion. But there is another difference also. So far as I am concerned, in spite of the language of high authority it uses, the British invasion is a played out affair and the new invasion may not be so. But ultimately our attitude is governed by our ideological sympathy with certain causes. It is a hateful notion that after five years of war China should be defeated. It is a hateful notion that Russia, which represents certain human values which mean a great deal to human civilisation, should be defeated.

But ultimately, naturally, I have to judge every question from the Indian viewpoint. If India perishes I must say—selfishly, if you like to call it—it does not do me any good if other nations survive.

Q: Do you not think that Indians are more anti-British in their sentiment compared to their anti-Japanese feelings?

JN: So far as I know India, and I know it tolerably well, the major sentiment in India naturally is one of hostility to the British in India. You cannot root out 150 years of past history and all that happened in those years. It has sunk deep down into the Indian mind. Suppose we had come to an agreement and had to convert or change that sentiment suddenly, we could have done it if we could have given a sensation of freedom to the people of India.

The fundamental factor today is distrust or dislike of the British Government. It is not pro-Japanese sentiment. It is anti-British sentiment that may occasionally lead individuals to express pro-Japanese views. But this is short-sightedness. It is a slave's sentiment and a slave's way of thinking that to get rid of one person who is dominating us we can expect another person to help us and in turn not dominate us later. A lover of freedom ought not to think that way.

It distresses me that any Indian should talk of the Japanese liberating India. The whole past history of Japan has been one of dominating others. Japan comes here either for imperialist reasons straightway or to fight with the British Government. Anyhow, whatever the reason, if it comes here, it will not come here to liberate.

Q: If an army comes here under the leadership of Subhas, what should be our reaction to it?

JN: I do not, frankly speaking, doubt the *bona fides* of Mr. Bose.¹⁰ I think he has come to a certain conclusion, which I think is wrong, but nevertheless a conclusion which he thinks is for the good of India. We parted company with him many years ago. Since then we have drifted further apart and today we are very far from each other. It is not good enough for me, because of my past friendship and because I do not challenge his motives, to say anything against him. But I do realise that the way he has chosen is utterly wrong, a way which I not only cannot

10. Subhas Bose escaped from India on 16/17 January 1941 and reached Berlin in April 1941. He set up a Free India Centre and *Azad Hind* Radio in Berlin in November 1941. He also organised a para-military force, the Indian Legion, in January 1942. In February, March and April 1942, Bose in his broadcasts called upon the Indian people to fight the British, and said the enemies of Britain were the allies of Indian freedom. He welcomed the Japanese statement of 'India for Indians'. Simultaneously in South East Asia, under the patronage of Japan, Indian Independence Leagues were formed by Pritam Singh and Amar Singh. Mohan Singh formed the Indian National Army or the *Azad Hind Fauj*. The Indian Independence Conference, under the leadership of Rash Behari Bose, at Tokyo, in March 1942, invited Subhas Bose to be their leader.

accept but must oppose, if it takes shape. Because any force that may come from outside, will really come as a dummy force under Japanese control. It is a bad thing psychologically for the Indian masses to think in terms of being liberated by an outside agency.

I think it is the job and duty of every Indian to be in India today, to face the dangers and risks, whatever might happen in India.

A suggestion was made to me by Colonel Johnson that he would be glad if I could go to America on a brief visit. But I decided not to go at a time of national peril like the present one.

Q: What are the possible intentions of Subhas Bose vis-a-vis the Axis Powers?

JN: I do not know his intentions. One thing seems to me obvious. How Mr. Bose will function I cannot say, but presuming the authenticity of the broadcasts, it seems he has taken up a certain position of friendship and alliance with the Axis Powers and from that certain consequences naturally follow. I think it is justifiable, on the basis of those broadcasts, which presumably are his, to come to the conclusion that he has allied himself with the Axis Powers, on what conditions and terms I cannot say.

Q: How can the United Nations help India now?

JN: The best thing they can do is to acknowledge India as an independent nation. I am prepared to welcome help and assistance from any nation or nations, if they are prepared to recognise India as an independent nation. That is all that I desire. I am quite convinced that America will like real popular war effort in India.

Q: Do you agree with Mahatma Gandhi on the question of scorched earth policy.¹¹

JN: I don't agree with Mahatmaji. Although I have given this

11. Mahatma Gandhi, in his article on scorched earth policy in *Harijan* of 22 March 1942, wrote, "Can we contemplate with equanimity or feel glow of bravery and sacrifice at prospect of India's earth being scorched and everything destroyed in order that enemy's march may be hampered? I see neither bravery nor sacrifice in destroying life or property for offence or defence." Because he refused to regard anyone as an enemy he wanted the people to leave their homesteads and crops without destroying them. Military requirements, he thought, should not supersede national or humanitarian considerations.

straight answer, it is not a complete answer. I have no doubt that if I were in the National Government, I would have burnt and destroyed everything that could help the enemy, not caring whose private property it was; but I am afraid if the British Government as constituted today follows this policy, it would follow it in a wrong and perverted way, thinking partly of hampering India a great deal. Therefore, I am not prepared to trust to their scorched earth policy.

There are many ways of getting over the loss consequent on the adoption of a scorched earth policy, like the insurance scheme in Britain. There should be a Government guarantee, may be America might come into the picture, that every help will be given to rebuild the destroyed industries and that they will be given the same shape as before if not better.

19. To Louis Johnson¹

New Delhi
April 13, 1942

My dear Colonel Johnson,

At the last moment I decided not to go away yesterday and postponed my departure for a day. I am now leaving this evening for Allahabad.

As suggested by you I have written a letter to President Roosevelt and am sending this to you.² I trust you approve of what I have written.

Thanking you again and with all good wishes,

Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. See *ante*, item 17.

20. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon¹

New Delhi
13.4.42

Congress decisions about Cripps proposals are contained in the long

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

resolution² and letters. Resolution was passed on April second expressing disagreement about future Dominion Status, claiming independence, also condemning possible division of India, though accepting principle of non-compulsion of territorial areas against their declared will, but subject to various conditions; strongly condemning rulers nominating representatives of states in constituent assembly, and thus ignoring entire population. Rulers influencing the making of constitution, yet having an option to stay out. Whole conception leading to break-up of India, with British forces guarding states, interfering with freedom of Union, and encouraging disruptive tendencies. Proposals for present were vague, with reservation for Defence which made power illusory, prevented development of popular mass defence which is essential. Congress however emphasized in view of great crisis that it was prepared to set aside all proposals for future, provided responsible National Government with Defence was formed now, leaving control of armed forces with Commander-in-Chief. Cripps made clear at early stages that he envisaged National Cabinet with Viceroy as constitutional head like King, subject to reservation on Defence. Discussion therefore centred round Defence. Cripps suggested division between popular Defence Minister and War Minister who was to be the Commander-in-Chief. Defence Minister's proposed functions were trivial and unacceptable to Congress. Further formulas for Defence were discussed. Ultimately Cripps stated that no substantial change was possible, also stated no National Cabinet with joint responsibility was possible, nor could assurances be given about use of Viceroy's powers with regard to intervention and veto. This was entirely at Viceroy's discretion; may later be discussed with him. Viceroy also functioning as prime minister. Thus no major change, only addition of popular representatives to Executive Council; legal position unaltered and no assurance even about conventions. Practically repeating August Offer with minor variations. This entirely different picture from what Cripps originally suggested; impossible to call this National Government or evoke enthusiasm in people. At no stage during talks was any communal or minority difficulty as Congress claiming power responsibility for National Government as a whole, and question about formation of government deferred. Last letter of Cripps surprisingly stated no possibility of National Cabinet with joint responsibility as this means tyrannical majority rule. This plea at last stage after the breakdown of talks without previous discussion, reference was most unfair and unjustified. Objection inapplicable to cabinet and in any case did not arise then. Ever since Cripps emphasising communal issue in old Amery manner and endeavouring divert attention from real issues,

2. See *ante*, pp. 188-191.

also stressing constitutional issues which not discussed. His whole approach has been wrong and vitiated by communal outlook. Congress went uttermost limit giving up previous objectives in negotiation. Crux of matter was for organisation of national Defence on popular mass basis but this is only possible by free National Government. Increasing bitterness here and in future impossible to accept anything short complete national freedom. United Nations should acknowledge independence of India. Meanwhile we are urging people to oppose aggressor invader, no submission on any account, but individual resistance is of little avail. All India Congress Committee is meeting at Allahabad on twenty-eighth.

Nehru

21. To Tai Chi-tao¹

New Delhi
April 13, 1942

My dear Dr. Tai,

I am exceedingly grateful to you for the precious gifts that you have sent me through Mr. Shen.² I value the inscriptions that you have written and I value very especially the small book which was your own personal copy of some of Dr. Sun Yat Sen's writings.

When the Generalissimo came to India your messages of goodwill were conveyed to me and I appreciated them very greatly. I must ask you to forgive me for not having written to you previously to thank you for these messages. Ever since I have come out of prison, I have wanted to write to you, but the rush of events and heavy responsibilities have prevented me from doing so and I crave your forgiveness for this. It was a sorrow for me that when you came to India I was unable to see you. I do not know when I may have the chance to do so again. But in these dark days, when danger and peril surround all of us, it gives me strength to think of your friendship and your goodwill.

I am distressed to learn that you have been unwell. I trust this was a passing indisposition and that you have recovered.

You must know that our negotiations with the British Government have failed again. We tried our utmost to come to terms with them, even giving up many of our cherished objectives for the moment, for the dominating factor in the situation was the danger of invasion of

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Chinese Commissioner in India at this time.

India. We wanted to play a full part in meeting every aggressor and invader and we wanted to mobilise the whole nation for this purpose. But this could only be done by a free National Government. The British Government would not agree to this and wanted to continue the present structure and just give us a few high places in the Viceroy's Council. That was an impossible position for us, for we want no high jobs but the opportunity to serve and defend our country to the utmost and at the same time to play a worthy part as an ally of China and other countries. We could only have a popular mass effort if the people realised that their country was free and had a free National Government. Only a free people can fight for freedom.

I am deeply distressed at the turn events have taken and naturally there is great bitterness among our people. Nevertheless we shall endeavour to pursue the policy of resisting every invader and aggressor, though in the circumstances our hands and feet are tied by British authority.

The next few months are full of peril for India and China, yet I have faith in both these countries and in their future. In that faith I shall work and do what I can, dreaming of the future when a free China and a free India are closely tied together by bonds that cannot break, and work together for their own good and the world's good.

I send you, dear Dr. Tai, my best wishes and cordial regards.

Very sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

22. Rejoinder to Stafford Cripps¹

Sir Stafford Cripps's statement made in Karachi about Congress leaders going to Colonel Louis Johnson and his acting as mediator is not correct and is liable to be misunderstood. Sir Stafford has not been fair either to Colonel Johnson or to the Congress leaders. There was never any question, as I have stated previously, of our asking for mediation or arbitration from anyone and President Roosevelt's name has been needlessly dragged into this matter.² We dealt with Sir Stafford alone though

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 13 April 1942. *National Herald*, 14 April 1942.
2. In his press interview on 12 April 1942 at Karachi, Cripps said that the role played by Colonel Johnson was entirely unofficial and in his individual capacity, and reiterated that it was the Congress which first approached Colonel Johnson for help and that President Roosevelt had no part in it.

others were naturally interested in the developments that were taking place. Colonel Johnson did not interfere in any way, though of course he expressed his desire that a satisfactory settlement should be reached. We are grateful to Colonel Johnson for his friendly approach to our problems though in the nature of things he could not interfere in what was taking place.

Sir Stafford has told us that the British Government is not going to take any further initiative to solve the Indian problem.³ We expect no initiative from them as they have managed to get completely stuck in the ruts of their own making. We do not rely on the British Government for anything except to obstruct political and economic advance in India. The initiative lies with others who do not live in the ruts. The dominating factor of the situation is the fact that India can only be defended effectively as a free country by the people themselves acting through their national government. I notice that parts of what I have said, torn from their context, have been given publicity by some sections of the press and by the radio. This is not fair. I think it is every Indian's duty to refuse submission to every aggression, old and new, and to resist it. We cannot and must not submit for that way lies a surrender of the soul and spirit of the nation. But it must be realised that effective resistance is not an individual matter and no one can deliver the goods except a free national government with power and responsibility, which can enthuse and organize the masses. This patent fact cannot be ignored and this is the crux of the question in India.

3. When asked whether the British Government would reopen the settlement question if Indians could arrive at an agreed solution, Cripps had replied that the British Government were always prepared to consider any agreed solution if that was put to them, but made it clear that the initiative should come from the Indians themselves.

23. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
15-4-42

Sent you express cable from Delhi thirteenth April—466 words.² Foreign

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. See *ante*, pp. 227-229.

press comments³ indicate misunderstanding of situation presuming Cripps's visit strengthened feeling of resistance against aggression in spite failure of negotiations. This entirely mistaken. Whole approach of British Government even at this hour of peril was wrong and misguided by refusing the transfer of real power and emphasizing unnecessarily communal question, which shocked Indian opinion generally including moderates even who were unprepared to accept it. Cripps's later attitude anti-Congress, communal and reactionary produced extreme bitterness. Congress decision welcomed almost universally, the only criticism being that Congress lowered its demands. Certain that no further approach from Congress to British Government. This reaction inevitably affecting our programme of resistance against aggression which is only effective under full National Government. Would like you make position clear to friends and others.

Nehru

3. For example, the *Star* wrote, on 12 April 1942, that the rejection by the Congress of the British Government's proposals came neither as a shock nor disaster. Jawaharlal's speech of 7 April 1942 (see *post*, section 3, item 1.) was cited by it as a proof that the failure of the mission had not weakened the feeling of resistance against the Japanese. It appreciated Jawaharlal's role in the negotiations: "he has displayed prudence and restraint in comment.... He played the part of a statesman."

24. Cable to Anita Blaine¹

Allahabad
15.4.42

I am grateful for your message and appreciate your sentiments.² Our fundamental position is that only free country can fight for freedom. Hence our demand for the recognition of Indian independence. If that is recognised other matters are easily adjustable by arbitration.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
Anita Blaine (1866-1945); American philanthropist; founder, School of Education, University of Chicago.
2. In her cable of 1 April 1942, she reproduced a message she had sent to Americans and Englishmen, for worldwide mobilisation of public opinion, to make an appeal to Roosevelt to arbitrate between Great Britain and India. This was necessary for all who were involved in the fight for freedom and could not be a concern of India and Britain alone.

25. Freedom First¹

Among the many astonishing things that Sir Stafford Cripps said in the statements made by him on the eve of his departure was this: that the Congress wanted everything or nothing, and now they have nothing.² Only the last part of this sentence is true and it has been true all these years. But if Sir Stafford imagines that what we suggested to him was all that we have wanted or want today, he was grievously mistaken. For, we have wanted and suffered for complete independence in the present and the elimination of every foreign control in the political, economic and every other domain. We have wanted to live our lives in our own way without interference from any outsider. And, though we cannot unwrite the history of the past century and a half, the painful memory of which will persist, yet we want to remove everything, in so far as we can, that might keep the memory of our subjection fresh. We want to get rid of this world of Excellencies and Highnesses and the pomp and pageantry and wasteful extravagance and incompetence of our British rulers. We want to say to them, as I have said before, in the words of a great Englishman: 'You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go'.

We want much. Our appetite for freedom is insatiable. We are hungry for it, and our throats are parched with thirst. It was not what we wanted that we told Sir Stafford Cripps, but something that we considered essential and irreducible if we were to shoulder effectively the burden of today and defend this dear country of ours to the uttermost. Without this we would remain ineffective and be mere camp-followers of those who are in control today, and who have exhibited so often their utter incapacity for the task.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 15 April 1942. *National Herald*, 16 April 1942.
2. Cripps was reported to have said this at a press conference on 12 April 1942 at Karachi. Later, at a press conference on 22 April 1942 at London, Cripps denied it and said, "I did not say that at Karachi.... It was shorthand report of a long statement". He elucidated: "what would be correct would be to say that they wanted complete power immediately for representative Indians and if they could not get that complete power for representative Indians then they were not prepared to participate in the Government of India at the present stage".

It surprises me how far we went in our desire for a settlement. Many of the colleagues and even the man-in-the-street came and told me that we went too far and gave up many a precious thing that we had so long clung to. Yet, we did so deliberately, for we almost forgot everything for the moment except the peril to India and our immediate duty to defend our motherland. But, we could only defend her shoulder to shoulder with our own people, with millions of hearts stirred to action, with millions of stout arms raised in her defence, with millions, it may be, of our dead offered at the altar of her freedom. We could not defend her from the mountaintops or from Viceregal residences.

The war is upon us. It is America's war, they say, for it is America that is pouring her vast resources and her treasure into this war and helping all her allies. Britain plays a minor part in it. But though America pours out her gold and sends her Flying Fortresses to the four corners of the world, we in India shall have to pay a far heavier price soon. And our price is going to be blood and tears, not of a few only but of vast numbers of people. Already we have had a foretaste of it in Malaya and Burma. But our time in India itself is coming and it was because of this that we went to the uttermost limits of concession in our talks with Sir Stafford Cripps. For, we were anxious to face this peril with the organised power of the state and our masses functioning together. That is not to be now and we function separately. From our side, there are going to be no approaches to the British Government, for we know now that whoever comes from them speaks in the same accent as of old and treats us in the same way.

So blood and tears are going to be our lot whether we like them or not. Let us not be afraid, let us not lose our anchor, let us not run away from our post of duty. But rather let us accept them willingly as men and women who go out to meet their hearts' desire. The turn of fate's wheel has brought this new ordeal to us, the last ordeal that can face a nation. Whether we remain up or go down, we shall do it bravely and with dignity, thinking ever of the honour of that great and beloved land that has given us birth and sustenance. For each one of us, man or woman, old or young, is a little bit of India and something of her old time story clings about us. Each one of us has her precious honour in our keeping, each one of us may do something to add to that glorious heritage. What we have, what we are, we owe to her; can we ever repay that debt even if we give our lives for her sake? Our blood and tears will flow; it may be that the parched soil of India needs them so that the fine flower of freedom may grow again and its fragrance envelop the land. We shall pay the price and it will be well with us if we remain true to our faith and do not falter.

26. British Distrust of Indians¹

Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and failure have worsened the situation and created an impression that even in the hour of imminent peril, Britain is not prepared to part with power in India and rely on her people. While the future was important, the present situation dominated the talks. Congress was unable to agree to the proposals indicated by Sir Stafford regarding the future but still was prepared to accept responsibility for Defence in cooperation with others. The essential background for this was to make it a people's defence by mobilising millions, trusting them, making them feel that India was free and that they were fighting for freedom. The British outlook was entirely different. It was distrustful and afraid of the Indian people and opposed to the growth of a citizen army and of handing over essential power to the people's representatives. The lessons of Malaya and Burma were entirely lost and some inefficient, reactionary governmental machinery was functioning isolated from the people.

Efficient defence is only possible by the closest cooperation between the state apparatus and the masses, which can take place only if the state is under popular control. Hence our desire for a real National popular Government controlling Defence but leaving full authority to the Commander-in-Chief for all war purposes.

At present, the relations with Britain are strained to the uttermost and there is a general feeling that Congress has been repeatedly insulted by British statesmen. No further approach is going to be made by Congress to the British Government. Nevertheless, the Congress has declared its inflexible opposition to all new aggression or invasion and will oppose in its own way Japanese or other aggressors. But, it is inevitable that popular opposition divorced from the state's war effort will be ineffective. Widespread anti-British feeling hinders mass effort. Future steps are dependent on circumstances and opportunities but the Congress is trying its utmost in spite of difficulties to organise self-sufficient units in towns and rural areas for self-protection and is creating a background for resistance and noncooperation with the aggressor and no surrender.

1. Interview to a representative of the *Daily Herald*, Bombay, 20 April 1942.
The Hindu, 21 April 1942.

27. To Tuan-Sheng Chien¹

My dear Dr. Chien,²

Thank you for your letter of the 18th April.³ I remember well our meeting two and a half years ago at Kunming at the Hotel du lac.

Your comment on Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and his proposals, as contained in your letter to Laski,⁴ shows a great deal of understanding of recent events in India. Cripps's visit here has been a complete failure and really has worsened the situation much. I must confess to being surprised at the tone and the attitude adopted by Stafford Cripps. His whole approach was wrong.

It is difficult to discuss a complicated situation in the course of a letter, especially when the situation changes from day to day. The question now, even more than before, is not one of finding some formula satisfactory to the two parties concerned, but of real and full transfer of power. It is patent that the present British Government is not going to do this. It is also patent that unless this is done the Indian Congress is going to keep far away from it. Meanwhile as the situation changes rapidly, much may happen. We are trying to follow a programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection, quite apart from the governmental programme and activity. In the military sense that is of course ineffective, but it has a great deal in it which will go to strengthen the people and help them to deal with the aggressor.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. This letter is undated in the source.
2. (b. 1900); political scientist; associated with the National Peking University, 1938-49; Vice-Chairman, Peking Municipal Committee, 1949-58; Editor, *China Reconstructs*, 1952-58; President, Peking College of Political Science and Law, 1952-58; Member, C.P.P.C.C., 1949-61; was declared a Rightist in 1961; author of *History of Political Institutions Under the Republic* and *The Government and Politics of China*.
3. In his letter Chien expressed distress over the breakdown of negotiations between Stafford Cripps and the Indian leaders and hoped that the Indian people would help in the work of civil defence.
4. Chien wrote to Harold Laski that the British proposals were most unfair to the Congress and to Stafford Cripps, alike. To the former because it would prevent them from achieving a united, free India. To the latter because it would put obstacles to his career which was so intimately bound with the future of Britain.

28. The Mission and the War¹

Let us be realist. Do not forget the past of India, which is helpful to us. India, like China, has an enormous capacity for survival. We must survive and be prepared to face all situations and with brave hearts we must face whatever happens. Individual loss does not matter in a fight for a nation's freedom. I do not like to enter into any argument regarding Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and its consequences. I am fairly competent to judge the effects of his mission in India. Sir Stafford is mistaken in his impression that the negotiations have improved the situation in India. How short-sighted the British Government has been and how all prospects of friendship have been lost! I know the English people fairly well. I painfully say that it is a natural habit of the English people to feel that God has given them the right to give paternal treatment to others. Sir Stafford Cripps thought they were arbitrators in India. In fact, Sir Stafford knew nothing about India.

India is our country and we cannot run away from it. We have to face the present danger. The position of India is very critical. I am not a pessimist. I am not prepared to see India as a passive spectator. To submit to anybody is an awful act. If I would have been in charge of Defence, I would have armed the whole nation and I would not have hesitated to take up the responsibility even at this late hour. I appeal to you to consider seriously over the present situation as difficult and critical times are ahead of us all. Indians should not be afraid of bombs. Take a lesson from the continuous bombing of Chungking for the last four years and the heroic resistance put up by the Chinese. I earnestly appeal to you to organise yourselves to carry on the *sangathan* work. *Shanti sena* should be organised in every village for the preservation of internal peace and order. In this connection I specially appeal to the students to go to villages during holidays and work in accordance with the Congress scheme. There is every likelihood of shortage of food-stuffs and hence the need for extensive cultivation of food crops. The usefulness and importance of cottage industries as propagated by Mahatma increase in view of the fact that big industries might become extinct and no cloth might be available from mills. People must spin and wear khadi or else they will have to remain naked. When the Japanese planes are hovering over our heads, we cannot sit tight or be sightseers. We cannot afford to see the tamasha. We must get prepared. When the

¹ Speech at a public meeting in Gauhati, 24 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27 April 1942.

people and the army combine in resisting the aggressor, it will be real war effort.

29. On Cripps's Press Conference¹

Question: What is your reaction to Sir Stafford Cripps's press conference at London on 22 April 1942?²

Jawaharlal Nehru: A brief report of what Sir Stafford Cripps said at a press conference in London makes it quite clear to us that those in authority in England live in a world of their own, which has nothing to do with the reality in India. Into this imaginary world we who are realists refuse to enter. Sir Stafford Cripps, by what he said here and in London on behalf of the War Cabinet, has made it perfectly clear to us that we can never have any compromise with the British Government till it undergoes a complete change in its thinking and approach with regard to India. There is going to be no approach to Britain on our part. We shall face the consequences whatever they might be. For, on no account are we going to give up Indian freedom, Indian independence and Indian unity. We are not going to act as Viceroy's secretaries and advisers or in any other subordinate capacity. We shall only function as members of a free National Government with real powers.

Sir Stafford goes on laying emphasis on this that constitutional changes were impossible and that all political leaders realised this difficulty during war time. This is an amazing perversion of facts so far as the Congress is concerned. We think that everything is possible for those who want to act. But no doubt the people who are tied up with nineteenth century thought find it difficult to act. As a matter of fact, we told Sir Stafford that even if legal changes were not made, conventions could be accepted and assurances given that there would be no interference by the Viceroy and others in the working of the National

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 25 April 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 26 April 1942, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 April 1942.
2. Cripps asserted that on the question of defence, the negotiations had had good results as was evident from the anti-Japanese statements of Jawaharlal and certain Muslim and Sikh leaders. He argued that, although Indian leaders were not taking any responsibility in the Government of India in the transitional stage, they would assist in an unofficial capacity in maximising the defence efforts in India. "The picture, therefore, is not a gloomy picture . . . it is an encouraging picture, although not as encouraging as it might have been, but much more encouraging than it would have been if nothing had been done."

Government. He refused to accept any such thing. So far as we are concerned, our course is perfectly clear. We shall submit neither to British imperialism nor to Japanese aggression. We may have to face disaster but we shall keep our self-respect and honour intact. Out of that very disaster a free and independent India will arise.

Q: What do you think about the resolution adopted at a meeting of the Madras Congress Legislature Party?³

JN: The resolution adopted at the meeting of the Madras Congress Legislature Party greatly surprised me. I am surprised not only at its contents but at the fact that Mr. Rajagopalachari, a member of the Congress Working Committee, had sponsored it. At any time this would have been undesirable, but on the eve of the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C. meetings such action was extraordinary.

It is not usual for members of the Working Committee to criticise each other in public statements and therefore I do not wish to say more than this at this stage that I entirely disagree with the approach adopted in the resolution of the Madras Congress Legislature Party.

Q: What is your impression from your tour of Assam about the relief work being done for the refugees?

JN: The real problem is not so much on the Indian side as on the Burma side, and I think Indian doctors and relief workers should go both to the Burma end of the Manipur Road and to the point from where the evacuees come to India. At both these places relief workers and doctors should go because arrangements there are far from satisfactory and people are greatly harassed.

I think two things are necessary; doctors and the human element. These evacuees want some sympathy.

The question of food supply is of paramount importance. In an emergency when a large number of people have to be shifted from one place to another food is the basis of order. If there is no food it will lead to looting and enormous suffering. There must be some arrangement for this. But there was nothing in Burma.

3. The resolution, sponsored by Rajagopalachari and passed on 23 April 1942 stated, "The general feeling of this part of the country is the need at this critical juncture for popular government. This province is doing its utmost to secure the requisite conditions for the people to play their part. This party is of the opinion that to facilitate such a popular government the Muslim League should be invited to participate."

What should be done is really for the experts' committees to consider in the light of the experience gained in Rangoon. The experts' committees should work out a scheme. They should seek cooperation of voluntary organizations and this will give them a popular backing.

Q: Does this mean that people should cooperate with the Government sponsored experts' committees?

JN: In a matter of this kind the only authority that can work is the state. It is very difficult for private organizations to organise this sort of work because rules and regulations will come in the way. But if the state does not function then private organizations should do all they can.

Q: What have you to say about those who have been evacuated from the districts of Bengal? They get food but what about employment?

JN: I do not think mere supply of food to these evacuated people in Bengal would do. An expert committee should deal with problems arising out of evacuation. Whenever there is a military necessity for the evacuation of a particular area a plan should be thought out previously, unless of course events force hands, and some alternative places should be provided to the people and compensation paid. But mere compensation would not do. Unless you provide them with some definite jobs or occupations I imagine the problem would remain insoluble. Government should provide for the occupation of the evacuees so that they may work and produce something. From any point of view irritating the civil population and making it discontented is bad. Suitable arrangements should be made so that people evacuated may feel that necessary arrangements have been made for them.

30. To Evelyn Wood¹

Allahabad
May 1, 1942

My dear Evelyn,

I have your three letters.² I am acknowledging them briefly as I am full

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letters of 13, 15 and 28 April 1942, he requested Jawaharlal to join hands with the Information and Broadcasting Ministry and help them in the National War Front Campaign and particularly wanted him to be involved actively.



WITH SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS AND MAULANA AZAD, NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH 1942

Handwritten notes and initials in the top left corner, including the word "Lament" and some illegible scribbles.

ANAND BHOWN
M. D. CH. CH.

3 Harding Avenue
April 7. 1892

My dear Stafford,

I have just received your note and I appreciate all you say in it as well as the urgency of the problem. I have been full of this problem all these days and overburdened with all its implications. I have not given up hope that some light may come to us yet, if not today or tomorrow, this year after. But I am convinced that it is beyond my power, even if I so wished, to get any considerable number of people to agree with the present view. That is a tragedy for all of us. Yet the tragedy need not be anything final. I'm speaking too much in terms of finality.

Whatever qualities and capacity I may possess will be devoted to meeting the situation that has arisen and in resisting such wrong tendencies as are threatening in the country.

Ever yours
Jawaharlal

of work at present. Possibly Denys Scott³ has told you of our conversation. I do not think you quite appreciate my position or the position of the Congress. We cannot possibly participate in any propaganda on behalf of the Government. I am distressed at my name and my picture being used in Government publicity. The situation is far more serious than our complaisant friends Stafford Cripps and Company realise. Cripps has effectively succeeded in creating a tremendous revulsion of feeling against the British Government and all its works in India.

He chooses to live in a paradise of his own creation and honourable members of Parliament indulge in the most foolish of platitudes. You may have some idea of how things are fashioning by reading the proceedings of the A.I.C.C.⁴ Even that will only give you a faint idea.

I have no programme and do not know where I will be on any particular day. There is no chance of my going to Bombay for some time at least.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. An employee of J. Walter Thompson Company (Eastern) Limited.

4. The A.I.C.C. met at Allahabad on 1-2 May 1942. See *post*, section 3, items 18-22.

31. To Evelyn Wood¹

Allahabad
June 5, 1942

My dear Evelyn,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of the 5th May.² As a matter of fact I got it only a few days back as I was away at Kulu and elsewhere.

Your analysis of the situation is fairly correct and on the whole I agree with it.³ Cripps surprised me greatly. I have liked Cripps as a

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter Wood had analysed the Indian political situation and enclosed a memorandum on national propaganda.

3. While commenting on the Indian political situation, he deplored the behaviour of Stafford Cripps and wanted the Congress to be more magnanimous and try to inculcate among the Indian people the feeling of self-sacrifice.

man, though I must confess that I have considered him a somewhat muddleheaded politician. But on this occasion I was surprised at his woodenness and insensitiveness, in spite of his public smiles. He was all the time the formal representative of the War Cabinet, in fact he was the War Cabinet speaking to us with a take it or leave it attitude. Always he seemed to impress upon us that he knew the Indian problem in and out and he had found the only solution for it. Anyone who did not agree with it was, to say the least of it, utterly misguided.

Indeed I made it perfectly plain to him that there were limits beyond which I could not carry the Congress and there were limits beyond which the Congress could not carry the people. But he thought that all this was totally beside the point.

I agree with you that our publicity is rotten.⁴ As a matter of fact it does not exist in any organized or deliberate sense.

Possibly I might be going to Bombay, though I am not sure. I am going to Wardha tomorrow for a few days. If I go to Bombay I shall see you there. But surely you realise that the difficulty in our way is not merely one of organising a campaign of publicity. It is more deep-rooted.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Wood regretted that while persons like Rajagopalachari got publicity, the official Congress did not get any publicity.

32. Independence and Independence Alone¹

Question: How do you react to Sir Stafford Cripps's interview to the United Press in London, that "We are not going to walk out of India right in the middle of the War, although we do not wish to remain there for any imperialist reasons."

Jawaharlal Nehru: I can quite believe that the British Government has no present intention of walking out of India in the middle of the war or after this. But much has happened in this war which the British

1. Interview to the United Press, Bombay, 16 June 1942. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 17 June 1942.

Government did not intend and did not like and much is going to happen in India and elsewhere in spite of the wishes of the British Government.

I do not wish to continue the argument on what took place during our conversations with Sir Stafford Cripps. This has been sufficiently debated in public and every aspect put before it. The Cripps proposals have gone into the limbo of things, done with and forgotten. They have no reality now.

Only one thing I should like to say, that is, that Sir Stafford's statement to the effect that the Working Committee had apparently accepted the proposals and it was only after further consultations with Mahatma Gandhi that they were turned down, is entirely incorrect. It is true that newspapers were making guesses and sometimes stating that the Working Committee was likely to accept the proposals, but Sir Stafford ought to know that these newspaper stories had no basis. After Gandhiji left Delhi there was no consultation with him of any kind and it is entirely wrong to imagine that the rejection was due to his pressure.

Sir Stafford appears to hint that our rejection was due largely to Gandhiji's adherence to nonviolence. This is also wholly incorrect. No question of violence and nonviolence arose in our talks or in our consideration of this subject. We rejected the proposals purely on political grounds and we rejected them unanimously because they did not transfer real power to the Indian people. It was only a travesty of power that was offered, and India, which has stood these long years for complete independence, could not accept these humiliating proposals. Let me say again that the question has to be considered on political grounds and on no other. It is on the basis of independence and independence alone that we can consider the question of India.

INDIA AND THE WAR II
April 1942—June 1942

1. Freedom from Aggression¹

There is a lot in my mind about the talks we are having with Sir Stafford, but it would be premature to say anything about it till the resolution of the Congress Working Committee is published. India's problem has suddenly become a world problem. So far, our approach to the question was fundamentally on the basis that pressure should be brought on the British Government to part with power and that the British Government and the people of India are the two principal parties in the dispute.

Although it is not customary for the head of one state to interfere in the internal affairs of another state, yet Chiang Kai-shek, the head of the Chinese state, who recently toured India, expressed himself in unmistakable terms on the question of India's freedom. The envoy of the United States of America in New Delhi is also taking interest in the matter. There is no representative of Soviet Russia in New Delhi, although Russia is Britain's ally, and Russia alone has done actual, real fighting in this war. We know the views of the representatives of the Government of India who do not seem to have realised yet that a war is going on in the world.

The Government of India did not allow any Russians to come here. Whereas the whole world has changed on account of the terrific events taking place every day, the Government of India remains unchanged. The Government of India is incapable of defending this country and our misfortune is that it is not allowing Indians to defend it. Whereas America has freely expressed its sympathy for India's freedom, Russia has no means of expressing it. Germany and Japan are also deeply interested in the Indian questions as is evidenced by their daily broadcasts in Hindustani. They are warning Indians against a settlement with Britain. The solution of India's problem will affect the whole world. The problem is complicated and the old slogans will not do. We have to consider so many factors. We are not so much concerned with what Russia, America and Britain want. Our attitude should be determined solely by the consideration of what is best in the interest of India's freedom. It is correct we want freedom for the world, but that would be meaningless for us unless it meant freedom for India also.

We have never hidden our sympathy with the democracies. We have always condemned aggressions, old and new. Our attitude in the matter

1. Speech at Queen's Garden, Delhi, 7 April 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 8 April 1942.

throughout has been consistent. We have raised our voice against Hitler's Germany, since it embarked on the policy of conquest. We are equally opposed to the system that enslaves India. We cannot help the democracies as long as we are not free from the shackles of foreign domination. British imperialism, despite its ramifications, is considerably weakened. It is no longer a first-class power, and whatever may happen, British imperialism can never survive the war.

Declarations regarding the constitutional status of India have very little value for the future which is so very uncertain. Their value is only for the present.

Our sympathy with Russia and China is real and genuine. It is distressing to think of a world in which Russia and China would have no place. China is a big country of Asia, which has been attacked by Japan. The Chinese have been fighting bravely for their freedom and in fact during the last four years their battle of freedom has cost them about four million lives, which shows what sacrifices they have made for their cause.

The fall of Russia will be a major calamity for the world. It would be utterly foolish if anyone were to desire a Russian defeat simply because Britain was on Russia's side. I have no doubt that Russia, China and America will play a leading part in the reconstruction of the post-war world.

The bombing of Indian coastal cities should not frighten you. You should not be content with playing the role of mere spectators when big and mighty events are taking place. We cannot reconcile ourselves to foreign domination. We cannot be mere spectators of the game of the Japanese troops fighting the British, Chinese and American troops on our sacred soil. Some people say "Jawaharlal is a fool. He is unnecessarily antagonising the Japanese and the Germans. The Japanese will wreak vengeance on him when they come to this country. It is wiser for him to keep silent, if he cannot actually speak well of the Japanese." I want to tell those people who give me this advice that Jawaharlal is not the man who will keep quiet when he ought to speak. On the other hand, I can only reject such advice, which is essentially based on fear, with contempt.

I have no enmity with Japan or the Japanese people, who have done many good things for their country. I had sympathy with them till they made an unprovoked attack on China. They are not coming to this country at my invitation. I think it is my duty to oppose and fight them. I am not prepared to accept the idea that I should be a spectator to all this and do nothing.

I am not prepared to put faith in the slogan that the Japanese are coming to India to liberate us. The past history of India goes against the claim. Nobody has ever come to this country to liberate. Whether we come to a settlement with the British Government or not, we will fight any army that invades India. We must have stout hearts. It is a question of the country's honour. It is more dignified from the point of view of national self-respect that our country goes down fighting with its soul intact and a hope of its rising again than that it resigns to its fate and loses its soul.

Though our talks with Sir Stafford have failed it does not mean that we will not come to a settlement later. India is now facing a trial. We must organise ourselves for every contingency. Nobody should run away in panic. It would be a great misfortune if we fell victim to any aggression without a fight.

Mighty empires have fallen in recent months. It will not be strange if India shares the same fate, but we will have the satisfaction of fighting for our cherished ideal and will have firmly laid the foundation of India's freedom.

2. To Chu Chia-hua¹

New Delhi
April 13, 1942

Dear Dr. Chu,

I must apologise to you for not having thanked you previously for your letter dated 29th January which you sent me.² That letter came at the time of the Generalissimo's visit to India. Ever since then we have been overwhelmed with our problems.

Recently, as you must know, we have been engaged in negotiations with the British Government acting through Sir Stafford Cripps.³ Those negotiations have unfortunately failed. We tried our utmost but the attitude of the British Government was rigid and unyielding.

We realise perfectly well that India today is becoming the crux of the war situation in the East. We want to do our utmost in this matter, but that utmost can only be done by a free national government and not by a foreign government which is distrusted and disliked. This foreign government has rendered us almost helpless in the matter and, even in

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Letter not available.

3. See *ante*, section 2.

this grave crisis of war, is unable to change its old ways. That is the tragedy of the situation. Nevertheless we shall do what we can and in any event we are not going to submit to any invader. I agree with you that whatever happens in between, and many very bad things will happen, in the end there will be a defeat of aggressor nations.

We are following with anxious interest the fortunes of war in Burma as well as in the Bay of Bengal. They affect us intimately just as they affect China. Chinese troops in Burma have fought well, but it seems to me that all British arrangements for defence have been feeble in the extreme. Anyhow we shall face whatever happens with a stout heart and with faith in the future.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Peter Johnson¹

New Delhi
April 13, 1942

Dear Sir,²

With reference to your letter of today's date asking me if I have any objection to the quotation of certain passages from my statement³ for the purposes of the National War Front publicity, I have to say that I have every objection. My statement has nothing to do with the so-called National War Front which I do not consider to be national at all. I think it is a misuse of terms for the Viceroy or any other foreign authority in India to talk of national front. I have nothing to do with the efforts made by foreign authority in India and I address myself to the Indian people only and advise them to take action apart from any official effort.

Yours faithfully,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Advertising consultant to the Government of India.

3. Speech delivered at New Delhi on 7 April 1942. See *ante*, pp. 247-249.

4. To Ganga Singh¹

Allahabad
April 15, 1942

My dear Ganga Singhji,²

I have received your letter.³ I need not tell you how distressed all of us have been by the news from Burma and more especially the news of the Indian refugees from Burma. I met Dadachanji⁴ in Delhi and many other people. Rashid⁵ came to see me today here. We live in difficult times and I suppose that we shall see in India, on a bigger scale, what you have seen in Burma. All one can say is that we shall try to face it and not forget our duty to India.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Resident of Rangoon; Member, House of Representatives, Burma, 1939; evacuee in India in 1942.
3. In his undated letter, he narrated how he and his family left for India and lost their property after the fall of Rangoon. He appealed to Jawaharlal to save India, since war led to extreme suffering for people.
4. B.K. Dadachanji (1877-1974); advocate, Rangoon High Court, till 1963; member of the Burmese Provincial Congress Committee and its delegate at the A.I.C.C., 1934-37; came to India in 1942 after the fall of Rangoon; founder of the Burmese Indian Rehabilitation Society, Rangoon; author of *War is Sin*.
5. M.A. Rashid, an Indian settled in Burma, returned to India in 1942 following Japanese occupation; was employed as Regional Labour Commissioner, Bombay. Returned after the war to Burma; founded All Burma Indian Congress, 1946; Labour Minister in Aung San's cabinet.

5. Non-belligerency and Not Neutrality¹

Although India is a subject country, she had declared, long before this war, that her sympathies lay with what Russia and China stood for. The Congress definitely considered the forces represented by Hitler and

1. Address to Congress workers, Calcutta, 18 April 1942. From *National Herald*, 19 April 1942.

Japan as dark forces, which if victorious would lead to a permanent slavery of India.

The Indian situation must be reviewed along with the international situation. The attitude of the Congress in this war is one of non-belligerency and not exactly of neutrality. I am sure that mass opposition can be organised by the state. I cannot possibly say what exact steps are to be taken by the people on the approach of an invading army. It is not a noble outlook to welcome an aggressor and I warn Congressmen and the people against the deceptive language of the aggressors and conquerors.

We must try to embarrass the enemy in every possible way. I have not come to Bengal with any definite programme. When India is being attacked by the enemy and when Britain as well as America are taking part in the war, I feel disturbed at the idea that I cannot do anything for my own country. I feel that I must go to friends and co-workers and the people at this critical time.

6. Cable to I. Badoo¹

Calcutta
19/4/42

Received your cable.² I appreciate your difficulties. I suggest your giving cooperation consistently with your and India's dignity. Cooperation as slaves impossible. We must stand for full racial, political equality and freedom. India has frequently declared antipathy towards fascism and supports the cause of freedom and democracy.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Badoo was a member of the Non-European United Front, Cape Town, South Africa, which was demanding arms for non-European soldiers and equal pay, promotions, pensions and military allowances for them, and withdrawal of the law placing non-European soldiers under European privates.

2. In his cable of 15 April 1942, Badoo asked for advice from Jawaharlal as to what the South African non-Europeans who wanted to cooperate with the progressives against fascism should do, when the Union Government was presumably thinking of discrimination against them.

7. No Toleration of Any Aggression¹

Never in her long history has India been menaced with a deadlier peril than what confronts her today. The nation is called upon to face great calamities. Throughout Europe and Asia men have been perishing by millions. The old order is crumbling down, but in the midst of this catastrophe there is the hope, that with the birth of a new order the people of India will achieve freedom which will enable them to carry out all their cherished programmes. No one knows when the war will terminate. But one thing is certain, there can be no staging back of the old order of things.

Several years ago the Congress adopted a resolution expressing sympathy with China and Spain in their fight against the aggressors.² Lately, Russia has shown what a severe struggle a freedom-loving nation can put forth for the defence of its fatherland. England, after the fall of France, and in the face of imminent invasion by Hitler, has shown courage and patriotism worthy of emulation. England professes sympathy for the cause of freedom and democracy. But sympathy for a cause is not by itself enough. The test of that sympathy lies in the establishment of identity of interests.

With the approach of war to the very gates of India the situation has naturally undergone a change. Congress had previously been in favour of complete independence. Now with the changed situation, the people of India want to defend the country against any Japanese invasion. But, unfortunately, the administration is run by a foreign Government which is incompetent and at the same time distrustful of the people, the people who even extended their hands of friendship. Unarmed as they are, Indians cannot, without any help of the state, resist the onrush of the enemy.

As for the Delhi negotiations, the Congress was prepared to waive for the time being many of its fundamental demands in order to arrive at a settlement with the Government. What was uppermost in the minds of the Congress representatives during the negotiations was how to defend the country adequately against the imminent peril.

Indians, as the situation has developed, have been placed in a quandary.

1. Address to Congress workers at the Howrah District Congress Committee office, 19 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21 April 1942.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 702-726.

What course are they to follow? They want to cooperate with the British but the latter do not trust them. If our countrymen take up any programme of their own accord the rulers will stand in the way. So far as the question of waging guerilla warfare is concerned, it can be carried on only in coordination with a regular army. Moreover, a lot of training is necessary for the successful conduct of such a campaign.

But should Indians sit with folded hands and remain inactive if the rulers do not provide them with an opportunity to take part in the defence of the country? The most important thing you should remember is that you must not, on any account, tolerate aggression from any quarter. True, we cannot hope to resist tanks with swords and primitive weapons, but we can in many ways embarrass the invader. An invading army, however big it might be, cannot overrun the entire country at the first onset. At the most, it can occupy a few important towns, but the courageous can deny them rations, cut off supplies and create obstacles in numerous ways.

Congressmen should inculcate in the people the programme laid down by the Congress, in the matter of self-sufficiency and self-protection. We have already begun the work in the United Provinces but there might be certain difficulties in carrying out such work in certain parts of Bengal which have been declared military areas. Villagers must form groups of five to ten villages, which should produce their essential requirements, namely, food and clothing. These village units will not rely on motor or railway transport. As for self-protection, forty to fifty families can combine to form a unit to protect themselves against lawlessness in the event of an emergency. The towns too should be divided for the purpose, into wards or *mohallas* as it has been done in Allahabad. This programme, if carried out successfully, will give them self-confidence. Moreover, if the administration at any time breaks down, especially in the countryside, the people themselves will have the opportunity to take up the responsibility of running the government.

I was very much pained to learn that with the entry of Japan into Burma, lakhs of people have in panic evacuated the city of Calcutta. They should have borne in mind the fact that bombs can cause injury only to a fraction of the population. It is, therefore, foolish to leave the city *en masse*. Almost every other people in the world including the Chinese, British and Russians are taking it manfully. The people of Chungking, who have been enduring air attacks for the last four or five years, deserve special praise. Here city-dwellers are migrating to villages but do not realise that even there immense problems of sanitation, food and medical aid can crop up. People should stick to their jobs and protect their hearths and homes, their wives and children.

Question: Do you see any reason for the inability of the Congress to cooperate with the Forward Bloc?³

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Forward Bloc has been set up as an anti-Congress organisation. I do not question the sincerity of its motive but there is no doubt that the principles and programme of the Forward Bloc are opposed to those of the Congress. The members of the Forward Bloc are following a different path and no question of cooperation between them and the Congress can arise. If one feels that the Congress has given a correct lead to the country he should follow it in every way.

3. The Forward Bloc stood for the utilisation of the international crisis for embarrassing Britain to the advantage of India's struggle for freedom. They were even prepared to join hands with the Axis Powers against Britain and were not attracted either to the nonviolence of Mahatma Gandhi or to the anti-Axis policy of Jawaharlal.

8. India's Survival¹

I do not know whether I can say much about this question of evacuation—evacuation not only from Burma and Malaya but also from various places in Bengal.² It astonished me to see how very incompetent and inefficient, though these words do not express my thinking adequately, the Government machinery was. I should say there is complete lack of intelligence in the handling of this problem of evacuation of the people from Burma and Malaya, and in the treatment of these refugees. The Burman Government collapsed like a house of cards.

How a government can collapse so quickly is really difficult to imagine. But it collapsed. All the civil servants and all the high officials ran away to save themselves and left the people, whom they were supposed to serve, to their own resources. It is a disgraceful story; it is a story of which any people should be thoroughly ashamed. If they presumed to govern, the least they should have done was to go down with the ship that sank. Their behaviour was disgraceful.

1. Address to the Indian Journalists Association, Calcutta, 19 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 21 April 1942.
2. Under the Defence of India Rules, the Government evacuated about 150,000 people between 1 to 24 April 1942 from Noakhali, Chittagong, Jessore, Diamond Harbour, Behala, Khulna and other places in Bengal. In most cases, the Government made no arrangements for their evacuation nor paid the cost of removal. There were also reports of police excesses.

Their prestige has been affected, but while their prestige has been affected, our lives have been affected, and thousands lie dead on the road from Burma to India and perhaps thousands are still dying. While it is a matter of prestige for them, it is a question of shedding of blood for thousands of Indians, maybe poor Indians, but nevertheless they are Indians, and we do not think of them as a class apart. These people had to travel by what has come to be known as the Black Road, while the rulers themselves have travelled by a safer road which has come to be known as the White Road.³

Leaving aside the question of humanity and looking at it from the point of view of expediency, what a foolish manner it was of doing something to irritate a large number of people. Instead of winning them over to their side the officials made the evacuees agents of propaganda against them all over India. It was an astoundingly foolish act.

I cannot measure that folly. The British Government has put up posters all over about the National War Front, the nation being represented by the Viceroy in his person, just as in olden days Louis XIV represented the state in himself. The Indian nation is represented by the Viceroy and the Viceroy talks about the National War Front. You and I may consider it an amazing effrontery but talk on these lines I cannot tolerate. They talk of the National War Front when thousands and thousands of our people are bunched somewhere near Akyab and in Mandalay without any help.

It is an amazing thing. It hurts me, it pains me, because I want the Indian people to prepare themselves, to organize themselves, for the defence of India. Because India is our own country, I cannot tolerate the idea of an invader coming to our country, nor am I going to sit in my house should that contingency arise. I do not know what we are going to do if unfortunately there is an attack by an invader, but I am not going to sit in my house. I do not know what I will do because in these circumstances people's functions are being guided by emotions and not by logical processes. It distresses me because I want the Indian people to think in terms of the defence of their country so that any invader of India, though he might talk of liberating India—every invader has talked in that fashion and every invader has bamboozled India—must be opposed. I am not prepared to tolerate any aggressor or invader. What I

3. The refugees from Burma were sharply discriminated against in the land routes to India. The Black Road, from Tamu to Waksu, was meant for Indians, and the White Road, from Tamu to Pallel, which was shorter and had all the amenities, was meant for Europeans. Indian evacuees at Waksu and Tamu were also not treated well.

will do, how I will function, is entirely a different matter, a terribly difficult matter.

This problem of evacuation of people from Burma would have been solved, and at any rate the situation would have been eased, if the money spent on a dozen bombs and aeroplanes had been utilised to organise relief. One may give some explanation for not doing this but one cannot make any excuse for racial discrimination and allowing people to die. I do not expect any relief in this direction as a result of the belated visit of the Hon'ble Mr. Aney to Manipur and other places.⁴ The same problem is still there to be faced by them. Fifty or sixty thousand evacuees are bunched at Akyab and almost an equal number at Mandalay towards which the Japanese are proceeding. Nobody is allowed to come through the Manipur Road because that is a military area. Again there is the same utter lack of intelligence.

In several places in Bengal orders have been issued for immediate evacuation. It is obvious that in an area threatened with invasion military authorities must take some steps to face that invasion. Nobody challenges that right of theirs. But there are two difficulties that come in the way. One is that the military has a singularly limited mind. It does not think of anything except of a certain military necessity. It does not take into account the human factor. The mind of the Government in India, the mind of the civil services in India, is almost typical of the military mind. It functions in the same limited military way.

The second is that a foreign Government, however well-intentioned, cannot even understand the difficulties of the local inhabitants much less deal with them. It is totally absurd for a person to come from outside and issue orders, asking you to go away within twenty-four hours from places where you have lived for generations. The problem would be a simple one, if that officer thought, while issuing the order, in terms of his own family. I can understand that in extreme cases something like this has got to be done. But in these places there is no necessity for evacuation within twenty-four hours and if there is that necessity they ought to have thought over it before. They erred in not doing so. With regard to compensation something has been agreed upon, and the twenty-four hours' period has also been extended to a week. This shows that the officers have a knack of irritating the people.

4. On his return from Assam, Aney said on 23 April 1942 that there was no longer any discrimination against Indians. "There is no road now confined to Europeans as such, nor is there any camp confined to exclusive use of Europeans and Anglo-Indians."

I cannot give you any particular advice in regard to this matter. If I am asked to go out at a moment's notice my reaction would be not to go out, whatever the consequences. If I feel it is a reasonable order then I will try to go out, otherwise I will not go and shall tell them to go and do what they like. I cannot speak of others. There may however be extreme cases of military necessity.

I am aware of the press censorship in Bengal. It is exceedingly foolish of the Government and the members of the civil service to keep you off from exercising your function of criticising their mistakes, some very fatal mistakes. These are the very things that require publicity. I do not know how far such publicity would help the Japanese but surely there are ways of dealing with a matter without giving any useful information to the enemy. But the Government has simply suppressed and bottled up people's feelings. Ultimately it comes to this: it affects not only thousands but millions of persons, who on hearing all sorts of stories get irritated.

Why have I come here to Bengal? I have come here to meet you and speak to you about these matters, but certainly I cannot give you the best advice. I have not come here with the idea that by my visit to Manipur, I would be able to solve the evacuation problem. But my visit shall draw a little more attention to this problem. What I have said about evacuation, has been published in other parts of India, but not in Bengal, where apparently the Government functions more intensely than in other parts.

I came to Calcutta on my way to Manipur and Assam for a very simple reason that I am a restless soul and I find it very difficult to sit down anywhere. My mind is perturbed and agitated at our helplessness. I want to make this country hum with activity, to create a tremendous unity of resistance to anybody who dares come to our fair land. An army may surrender but a people who are determined do not surrender whatever happens. I want to convert India into an armed camp of people who would not surrender, whatever might happen to the army. That is a kind of thing which the military do not understand. They know how to fight but they surrender against heavy odds. But when people fight they cannot surrender, they cannot have other fronts, they cannot go away from their own hearths and homes, but they have got to live and die there. Are you ready to go to Iran or Baluchistan? No. We have to live and die here whatever happens and thus the whole outlook of defence becomes different.

It is a war to the death, to the end, without any surrender. This is what I want to do. But I cannot do it. That is why I fret and fume and I roam about.

I have been asked to give advice as to what the people in Bengal should do in the matter of their defence. It is very difficult to lay down any positive line of action, but it seems to me obvious that on no account must we submit or surrender to any aggressor or invader. Therefore, it follows that we must train the people to develop an attitude of no surrender and no submission. You must bear in mind that any foreign army that comes, in whatever guise and with whatever professions, will after all be a foreign army which will try to make a home for itself in India. If once aggressors establish themselves in this country it would be very difficult to deal with them or dislodge them in future. It is also undesirable psychologically to think in terms of a foreign army giving the freedom. It is a weak nation's way of thinking that a foreign army will make it free. It is a slave's way of thinking that an invading army will liberate his country. Positively what can we do for the defence of the country? On the one hand we have deliberately divorced ourselves from the state apparatus. We cannot join it for many reasons, so we have to keep apart from it. But while keeping apart, what can we positively do for the defence of the country? In fact so far as the military areas of operations are concerned, we cannot do anything, and it is only the military which can operate there. But areas of active military operations are after all limited in a huge country like India.

It is easy to overwhelm small countries like Belgium but India like China is a country of vast hinterland, and in those vast spaces outside the immediate areas of armed conflict, much can be done by the people through noncooperation. I cannot enter into details because it is the Congress which will lay down the policy. This policy has to be shaped according to the exigencies of circumstances. One policy might be good in a particular area and a different policy might have to be pursued in another distant part of the country.

Some misapprehensions have been caused in the public mind by my use of the expression 'guerilla warfare' in my speech at the press conference at Delhi.⁵ We cannot think loosely of guerilla warfare. What I said then was that a national government only can organise guerilla warfare. It becomes an entirely different problem to think in terms of an organisation completely separate from the state. In fact, having no

5. Mahatma Gandhi, in his letter to Jawaharlal on 15 April 1942 referred to the latter's press conference, and wrote: "I see no good in entering into a guerilla warfare when the American and Chinese forces enter India." In his article in *Harijan* of 26 April 1942, Mahatma Gandhi dealt with Jawaharlal's fancy for guerilla warfare which he said would be a nine-day wonder. "It will make no effect. It is foreign to the Indian soil." For Jawaharlal's press conference see *ante*, pp. 223-224.

common ground with the state, I do not see how guerilla warfare can be organised by us under the present circumstances. Besides, guerilla warfare is not a thing that can be immediately organised. It requires training, equipment and the like, and it requires coordination between the armed forces of the state and the people, just as it has been possible in Russia and China. So to think in terms of guerilla warfare in India under the present circumstances is to think in terms of unreality.

The real background for resistance ultimately depends on that the people must develop a spirit of no submission and no surrender. We must try to organise our village and town units and make them self-sufficient and capable of self-protection and that is the present Congress programme. Whatever policy we might pursue, aggressive noncooperation or passive resistance, these units will help us in preventing panic, controlling the situation and providing security against any lack of food or other essential commodities. This programme will bring to the people a spirit of self-reliance. And if this programme is really worked out, it will provide a tremendous basis for any action we decide to undertake, whatever policy the Government might adopt.

In Bengal, it is very difficult for us in the existing circumstances to work out this programme because the province is more or less a military area. Bengal's difficulties are therefore far greater than the difficulties of other provinces. Nevertheless, I suggest that the programme should be intensively worked in this province.

In India it is absurd to call this war a 'people's war' and it would be equally absurd to call it an 'imperialistic war.' It is a war ultimately for the survival of each country involved in it. All the countries are fighting for their survival. The only exception perhaps is the United States of America. So to stick a label on this war and decide on a different course of action is absurd.

Personally, I was motivated by my antipathy to Nazi Germany, Japan and fascists, and sympathy for Russia and China. But after all, in the ultimate analysis, I am motivated by a strong sense of survival for India. This is the only test for me. The people of India can only function from the narrow point of view of self-preservation and self-survival whatever might be my personal opinion about the larger issues.

We may noncooperate with the British, but today the question of noncooperation with the British in a sense does not arise, because noncooperation with the British today inevitably means an invitation to Japan to come to India. It also means enormous help to Japan. The Congress could have obstructed the war efforts in India if it wanted to. But the Congress deliberately did not do so. To do that when the invasion threatens us would only help the invaders.

Today we have to face naked realities. Old slogans are of no avail in the present circumstances. In this changing situation, we have to change our attitude and policy fundamentally, keeping the freedom, defence and security of India always before us. I cannot give you any detailed advice as to the course of action you should follow. But it would be utterly wrong for us to allow any mentality of subservience or surrender to an invader to grow in us. I would like the Indian people, even the employees of the Government, to do all they can to defend the country. But the fact stares us in the face that unless the state and the people's organisations merge together, the people by themselves cannot do much. In fact, the state organisation will intervene if we attempt to organise the defence ourselves. Therefore, in the present circumstances, it is not a practical proposition, but it might become a practical proposition with the changing fortunes of the war. Therefore, we should try to organise the people through programmes of self-sufficiency and self-protection in order to deal with any changing situation and even to face the situation if the whole burden falls upon us in our local area.

9. No Surrender to the Aggressor¹

The grave situation in Burma has brought the danger nearer to Assam. But you should not give way to panic. Whatever may be our fate we will not yield to any aggression. As we have not yielded to the British for so long, similarly we will not surrender to the Japanese or the Germans. It was quite natural for the Indians in Burma to return to their homeland under the present circumstances created by the war in that country. But where would we go leaving our homes if that situation came to this country?

You should stay where you are in order to face and fight any possible aggression. The Indians in Burma complained of atrocities by traitors, but they should have collectively resisted those atrocities rather than yielding to them individually.

I do not rule out the possibility of aerial attacks on Indian towns, but sufficient precautions can be taken to minimise the adverse effects of such incidents.

1. Address at the Indian Evacuees Camp, Dibrugarh, 23 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25 April 1942.

We should all be ready for such a time when it may become necessary for every Indian to sacrifice himself for his motherland, and I am sure if that opportunity comes, Indians will not be lacking in the spirit to fight for victory.

10. Defence by One's Own Strength¹

The presence of the Japanese army in Burma brings the war to Assam's threshold. But people should not lose heart. Japanese assurance to liberate India is false, unreliable and preposterous. India must depend on her own strength. A successful modern warfare requires close co-operation between the government and the people. Guerilla warfare as a part of the general war can be fought only by a free India. The policy of noncooperation has to be modified according to the place and time. The only method of resisting the aggressor is to organise Shanti Sena,² and by planning regional self-sufficiency. Do not run away.

The Congress hates aggression by Japan or Germany. The Congress wanted power to fight invaders but the Government refused to part with power. The result was that Stafford Cripps's mission failed. It is humiliating to sit idle when India is being invaded. Hard times are ahead. All should put their shoulders to the wheel—men, women and students. To talk of the War as a people's war is meaningless. The Congress wanted to make it a people's war but the British Government refused.

Assam's position is peculiar. The hill tribes should be treated kindly and the villages should be organised for self-defence and communal harmony should be maintained.

1. Address at Jorhat, 23 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 25 April 1942.

2. Peace Brigade.

11. Fight Hitler and Japan to the End¹

Hitler and Japan must go to hell. I shall fight them to the end and this is my policy. I shall also fight Mr. Subhas Bose and his party along

1. Interview to the press, Gauhati, 24 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 April 1942.

with Japan if he comes to India. Mr. Bose acted very wrongly though in good faith. Hitler and Japan represent the reactionary forces and their victory means victory of the reactionary forces in the world.

If a Japanese army invades Assam the attitude of the people should be one of "no surrender and no submission." The people should put obstacles and difficulties in the way of the aggressor. The Japanese gave independence to none and nobody gives it to others. God helps those who help themselves and we shall get independence when we will.

If a National Government functions then and then only guerilla warfare is possible. Guerilla warfare requires much training, equipment and coordination of the armed forces of the state. An invading army cannot overrun the entire country.

12. On His Assam Tour¹

For four days and three nights, I toured up and down the valley of the Brahmaputra and visited many places in both the lower and upper Assam.² The tour was all too brief. Yet, with a maximum of rapid movement (in spite of petrol difficulties and minor motor mishaps) and a minimum of sleep, I covered a great deal of ground. During my eighty-four hours' stay, I travelled about 800 miles and visited Gauhati, Naogaon, Golaghai, Dimapur, Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Tezpur, and Boko, and stopped for a brief while at many other places. I also saw the evacuee arrangements at Parbatipur and Pandu.

My object was two-fold: to meet my Congress colleagues and fellow-workers, to confer with them about the work to be done, to renew contacts with the pleasant and agreeable people of Assam, and to understand the situation in the province. Secondly, to meet evacuees from Burma, to find out what was being done for them and what more could be done.

I was happy to be back in Assam with its noble river and its fascinating forests and lovely scenery, and, above all, its sturdy people, who always impress me as those who have strength and do not easily falter. I am attracted also to the tribal folk and wish that I could be of greater service to them. As I travelled, my mind went frequently to that brave young woman Gaidilieu, styled the Rani, who has lain in jail now for twelve

1. Statement to the press, Calcutta, 25 April 1942. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26 April 1942.

2. Jawaharlal visited Assam from 21 to 24 April 1942.

long years, and still lies there.³ In prison, cabined and confined, she has grown from girlhood to womanhood, an emblem of her own simple people.

Assam has always impressed me with its great potential strength and resources, undeveloped so far by man, or rather by those who wield authority. It is a wealthy land with its minerals and forests and untilled areas; only the people are poor.

I was glad to see the spirit and enthusiasm of the people, the fire in the eyes of the boys and girls, which not all the threats and perils that encompass them had dimmed. A grand rally of the Shanti Sena at Boko was a sight I shall not forget for a long time. The Congress programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection was being carried out with a fair measure of success.

I met many hundreds of evacuees from Burma, coming both by the Manipur Road and by air, and had a glimpse of the arrangements made for them. My visits were too short for detailed inquiry or observation, and always I had a feeling that the visit itself had produced an abnormal atmosphere. Whether in Assam, or *en route* to the main camps, or in the Calcutta evacuee camps, there was some desire to show off. Still I formed a fair picture of what was happening.

I do not propose to go into any details here as I do not think I am competent to do so without further inquiry. Also, I presume, that Pandit Hridayanath Kunzru who recently went to Imphal with Mr. Aney, and who had greater opportunities of observation, will give the public his impressions of what he saw.⁴ His recommendations will no doubt be valuable. I could not go as far as Imphal, as this required special permits, which I did not possess. I could only visit Dimapur on Manipur Road, the base camp of the evacuees who come that way. Among the large number of evacuees I met, whether they came by road or air, there were two dominant feelings: a feeling of relief that they were at last out of the hell they had been living in for some months past, and a feeling of great resentment at the racial discrimination, especially on the Burma side of the road. They had suffered much, had lost almost everything they possessed, had been ill-treated by petty officialdom, and yet one and all experienced a feeling of enormous relief at being back in India. There were people there whose original homes were in all parts of India—

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, pp. 501-502.

4. Kunzru and A.M. Dam, members of the Central Standing Evacuation Committee, on 27 April 1942 stated that Indian refugees were beaten by police and evacuation officials, were humiliated and made to feel that they belonged to an inferior race. They recommended that all camps be taken over by the Government and administered efficiently.

Bengal, Orissa, Madras, Bombay, Bihar, Gujarat, United Provinces, Rajputana, Punjab, Baluchistan, etc.,—and yet on their return to Indian soil, they all felt that they had come back to the homeland. It was a significant demonstration of the unity of India.

One does not expect comforts and conveniences in war time, especially when an invading army is advancing. But the civil population does expect a measure of protection from the Government that is functioning and, in times of crises especially, fair treatment and no discrimination. One of the astonishing things that happened in Burma was the collapse of the Governmental apparatus. The manner of the evacuation of Rangoon and South Burma was discreditable. Local officials functioned in some places and they seldom functioned well. Indians in distress seemed to have no friends outside their own ranks; neither the local officials nor the Burmans looked upon them with friendly eyes. Everybody suffered because of the inefficiency of the arrangements but the Indians suffered most. It is amazing that it should have taken two or three months for some order to emerge out of all this.

Latterly, I think, there has been improvement in the arrangements along the evacuee routes. This is especially so on the Indian side, though even there much remains to be done. On the Burma side, conditions are still bad. The main route so far has been through Manipur and nearly one thousand people are coming through this daily. Along this route, as is well known, there was the scandal of the 'White Road' and the 'Black Road'. The 'White Road' is probably a misnomer as many people whose complexions were very dark indeed were permitted to go along it, provided they had trousers on—those insignia of European civilisation. One instance was brought to my notice when a gentleman in trousers was allowed to travel by bus, but when his wife appeared in a sari, he got into difficulties. Recently Indians, even in dhotis and pyjamas or saris, have been allowed to travel along the 'White Road', but there are still certain restrictions limiting their numbers.

The air route from Myitkyina to Dibrugarh is now being used extensively for evacuation. Few Indians were brought over this way and those few who came had to pay heavily, while others were transported free or almost free. Now, many more Indians are brought over and a certain latitude in payment allowed, according to the evacuees' financial condition. Some are flown over free. On the day I visited Dibrugarh nearly 600 evacuees arrived there from Myitkyina. Of these about 300 were Indians, the rest mostly Anglo-Burmans.

On the Indian side of the route, there were complaints of misbehaviour of petty officials and police and sometimes extortion. Medical arrangements are still poor, though some doctors have been sent, but

without adequate equipment or supplies. Nevertheless, there has been recently considerable improvement on the Indian side. It is the Burma side that appears to need complete overhauling. From all reports that we had, conditions are highly unsatisfactory there. No efforts are made to collect Indians in proper camps and they drift in from all sides and have to shift for themselves. Sometimes they have to stay at the route head for many days before they can get permission to go through. This applies to both the land route and the air route. In Myitkyina, we were told that the camp houses were more or less reserved for Europeans, and Indians had to live under the trees or make some other arrangements. In India, large numbers of relief workers and societies help to lighten the burden of these unhappy refugees. Not so in Burma, where both officials and people favour non-Indians in every way.

I was told that a large sum is paid by the government to a number of European planters and their assistants for helping the evacuees. Apart from the fact that European planters are unsuited for looking after Indian evacuees, it seems odd that public money should be spent in this way, when there is no lack of voluntary help available. The various voluntary relief agencies and individuals have been doing splendid work on the Indian side. My one complaint against them is that I got an impression, sometimes, of the rich feeding the poor and thus acquiring merit in this world and the hereafter. This approach is too patronising to be good.

The scope of this voluntary work could easily be increased, given opportunities by the government. It seems to me especially necessary for relief organisations to be allowed to go all along the Manipur Road right up to the Burma base camp. Why government should object to this; I do not know. It will lighten their burden, increase efficiency, and bring a human element into the work, which is lacking where only officials function. In Dibrugarh, there should be one or more women workers to look after the women evacuees.

At Myitkyina there should also be some Indian representatives to look after the interests of Indians. Presumably, the military are in control in North Burma and they must want all evacuees to be removed as rapidly as possible. In this task they would receive the full cooperation of our workers. Officials have not covered themselves with glory in this work of evacuation. They have shown inefficiency and partiality and the sooner they realise that others can function better, the nearer shall we be to a solution of this problem.

The problem is not solved by merely bringing the evacuees to India. An effort has to be made to provide work for them. A businessman told me that he was prepared to provide for five to ten thousand either in

his sugarcane plantations or in factories. But the Assam Government did not encourage him or his scheme.

I understand that some effort is being made by provincial governments to provide for Europeans and Anglo-Burmans in India. Members of the Burma Civil Service are, of course, immediately absorbed into the Indian Civil Service. They find their level there. As for the humbler folk, I have no objection to India extending her hospitality to all who are in distress. But it is absurd and intolerable that our own people should be ignored in the process.

An incident, which brings out the way officialdom functions in Assam, was brought to my notice by a friend. Some weeks ago, about 700 tea garden labourers were impressed for work on the Manipur Road and were being taken to Dimapur. They reached Pandu and remained there for two or three days waiting for the train to carry them. There were no arrangements for their food or shelter. No one had given thought to this matter.

I have not touched here on the many problems of Assam. One problem of recent growth cannot, however, be ignored. This is the food scarcity due chiefly to disorganisation of transport. This must be attended to.

13. Embarrass the Aggressor¹

Question: What is your message to the people of Assam after the conclusion of your tour here?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Not to falter whatever happens, but to stand for Indian independence and not to submit to any aggressor, old or new.

Q: What is your advice to the people for self-protection and self-sufficiency?

JN: They should organise themselves for these, so that they can face all developments with confidence.

Q. In the event of an air raid how will they keep up their spirits and maintain discipline?

JN: If they observe simple rules and take ordinary precautions there is no reason why they should become panicky. One gets used to air

1. Interview to *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, 25 April 1942. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 27 April 1942.

raids very soon. They are bad but not so bad as people think them to be.

Q: How will they fight the Japanese aggressors?

JN: That is a matter for the A.I.C.C. to determine and must depend on events and circumstances. Generally speaking they should non-cooperate with the invader and embarrass every aggressor.

Q: What impression have you gathered from the talks you had with the evacuees at the Manipur Road station?

JN: Conditions have improved somewhat on the Indian side of the road but they are still bad on the Burma side. Even on the Indian side more can be done.

Q: The Commander-in-Chief in his recent broadcast speech said: "They (Japanese) may raid India. They may even seek to occupy a portion temporarily, but so long as India remains true to herself she can never be conquered."² How do you react to this statement?

JN: My conception of remaining true to myself is necessarily different from that of the Commander-in-Chief, our fundamental loyalties are different, possibly, our ideals in life are also different. To remain true to myself I must remain true to India and Indian freedom. Our paths are not the same though occasionally they may be parallel for a short while. For my part I cannot submit to any Japanese aggressor just as I have not submitted and cannot submit to the old British aggressor in India.

2. The broadcast was made on 21 April 1942.

14. Congress Resolution on Evacuation Orders¹

The attention of the All India Congress Committee has been drawn to various orders passed by Government or the military authority for the evacuation of certain areas in some parts of the country. Such evacuation is often necessary in times of war for reasons of military necessity

1. This resolution, drafted by Jawaharlal on 27 April 1942, was passed by the Working Committee on 28 April and endorsed by the A.I.C.C. on 30 April at Allahabad. Only the first paragraph was printed in *The Bombay Chronicle* on 29 April 1942 as the second paragraph was banned under the Defence of India Rules. The full text is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

or the safety of the population in a particular area. But it is a recognised practice that no such orders should be passed, except in cases of sudden and extreme urgency, without giving reasonable and sufficient time to the people concerned to make other arrangements and, in any event, without every facility of transport and adequate compensation. It appears that no such facilities have been provided and in many cases no compensation, or totally inadequate compensation, has been given. These orders have demanded evacuation from an area within twenty-four hours, thus making it impossible for families to do anything but to walk out, camp under the trees, become destitute and starve. No government, worthy of the name, should allow this to happen, and even from the military point of view such happenings are highly undesirable as they lead to widespread resentment among the people. This callous treatment of large numbers of people, as if they were a hostile population, will inevitably make them hostile.

The Committee has also noted with dismay that frequent and well-authenticated reports have been received of the molestation of women by soldiers in railway trains and evacuated and other lands. These have already led to disastrous consequences in some places and there is a growing and widespread feeling of deep resentment, especially at the inability of any authority to take effective measures to prevent these happenings or to punish the culprits. The civil authority appears to be powerless and the military authority disinclined to intervene. In view of the increase of soldiers all over the country and the railway trains being full of them, a sense of fear and alarm has spread over the land. The Committee trusts that immediate steps will be taken to check and put an end to this molestation before further disastrous consequences follow and civil order gives way to disorder and anarchy.

15. The Lessons of Rangoon and Lower Burma¹

The Committee has noted the recent extraordinary happenings in Lower Burma and notably in the city of Rangoon, when, although actual military operations were still some distance away, the whole civil administration

1. This resolution, drafted by Jawaharlal, was passed by the Working Committee on 28 April 1942 and was endorsed by the A.I.C.C. on 29 April at Allahabad. Its publication was banned under the Defence of India Rules. The resolution is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

suddenly collapsed and those in charge of it sought their own safety and abandoned their posts just when their presence was most needed. Private motor cars were commandeered for the evacuation of high officials and Europeans, leaving their owners stranded and unprovided for. The police force was discharged or withdrawn to other places, habitual and other criminals were released from prisons, and the lunatics allowed to go out of their asylum. The city of Rangoon was thus left not only without any civil administration but at the mercy of lunatics, hardened criminals, and other anti-social elements. Even previously at the time of the air raids, it had been evident that the A.R.P. organisation did not function and no thought had been given to the problem of organised evacuation, food supply or shelter. A situation was thus created which involved the citizens of Rangoon in utmost misery and desolation, and which was discreditable in the extreme to the government and its high officials.

As war approaches India, the lessons of Rangoon and Lower Burma are full of meaning for this country, for the same type of officials wield authority here and the recent astonishing exhibition of panic and incompetence in Madras² demonstrates the dangers arising from inefficient and irresponsible officials who have in addition no contacts with the people of the country. Recent orders passed and circulars issued on behalf of the various provincial governments indicate that they are obsessed with making provision for the safety of the higher civil officials and their removal from places of immediate danger. Little thought appears to have been given to the drawing up of well-prepared schemes for possible evacuation of a particular area and the arrangement of transport, housing and food supply in a time of emergency. It is the misfortune of India at this crisis in her history not only to have a foreign government, but a government which is incompetent and incapable of organising her defence properly or of providing for the safety and essential needs of her people.

As no reliance can be placed on the central or provincial governments functioning in India now to act effectively and intelligently in times of emergency, it becomes the especial duty of the people to rely upon and organise themselves for this purpose. The Congress programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection is the essential foundation for self-reliance and the avoidance as far as possible of many of the evils that follow in the train of war. On this programme, therefore, the people must concentrate themselves. In the larger cities where special problems

2. On 6 April 1942, Kakinada and Vishakhapatnam, were bombed. The local government immediately gave orders for evacuation. Government offices were shifted to various places. The ports of Madras and Vishakhapatnam were closed. Also see the following item.

arise, schemes should be worked out with the help of experts in regard to food supply and the other measures that may be necessary in time of emergency. In particular all panic should be avoided even though those in authority give way to it.

16. Evacuees and Refugees from Malaya and Burma¹

The All India Congress Committee has noted with indignation the arrangements made for, and the treatment accorded to evacuees and refugees from Malaya and Burma to India. The officials, whose business and duty it was to protect the lives and interests of the people in their respective areas, utterly failed to discharge that responsibility and, running away from their post of duty, sought safety for themselves, leaving the vast majority of the people wholly uncared and unprovided for. Such arrangements for evacuation as were made were meant principally for the European population and at every step racial discrimination was in evidence. Because of this and also because of the utter incompetence, callousness and selfishness of those in authority, vast numbers of Indians in Malaya and Burma have not only lost all they possessed but have also undergone unimaginable sufferings, many dying on the way from lack of the necessities of life, from disease, or from attacks from anti-social elements.

Racial discrimination was shown at the base camps in Burma where special arrangements were made for Europeans and Anglo-Burmans while Indians were left almost uncared for; in the according of special facilities for transport and travel to the Europeans and Eurasians; and in the general treatment given to Indians and non-Indians along the routes and at the various camps. In particular, this was in evidence in the scandal of a safer and more convenient route being practically reserved for non-Indians, while Indians were forced to travel by a longer, more difficult and more dangerous route.

The Committee is aware that recently some alterations have been made in these arrangements and that Indians are now being brought over by air from Myitkyina, and can also avail themselves of the safer

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal for the Working Committee, meeting held on 27 April 1942 at Allahabad and passed by it on 28 April 1942 and by the A.I.C.C. on 30 April 1942. *National Herald*, 29 April 1942. Also available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

land route in limited numbers. The treatment of the evacuees and refugees on the Indian side of the border though somewhat better now is still far from satisfactory. But from all reports the conditions at the base camps for evacuees in Burma are highly unsatisfactory and the worst sufferers there are Indians. The Committee calls upon the Government of India to make all necessary arrangements for the speedy evacuation from the unoccupied zone in Burma of all Indians who wish to be so evacuated. Suitable Indians, official and non-official, should be appointed to supervise and look after the comforts of Indians in the base and other evacuation camps and on all routes used by evacuees. The Committee trusts that non-official relief agencies will be permitted to send workers and doctors all along the Manipur route from Dimaipur to Tamu and beyond to the base camp on the Burma side, as well as to Myitkyina, which is the air base for refugees.

The problem of the evacuees and refugees from Burma is not solved by merely bringing them to India. Every effort should be made to find suitable work for them in existing establishments or on the land, or regular semi-permanent camps should be started where productive work for wages is organised.

The Committee expresses its appreciation of the fine service rendered to the evacuees by various non-official relief organisations and by their voluntary workers. The Committee calls upon the Indian public to extend all possible help to the evacuees, and particularly all employers to provide employment for as many of them as possible. The Committee also extends its warm welcome to all those Indians who have returned to the homeland in these distressing circumstances and assures them of its deep sympathy and anxious interest in their cause.

17. The Banned Resolutions¹

You must be all aware of the action taken by the Government of India in regard to the three resolutions² passed yesterday by the Working Committee. Within a few hours of the resolutions being passed, the Government issued a Gazette Extraordinary banning publication in any

1. Speech at the open session of the A.I.C.C., Allahabad, 29 April 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1942. File No. 4/1/42, National Archives of India.

2. See the preceding three items.

newspaper of a part of the first resolution and the whole of the second resolution. It is for the first time that the publication of the Working Committee's resolutions has been banned. I will read these out to you and our proceedings will continue here in spite of these orders. I do not know how far it is against the new rules and regulations. You must have received these resolutions in Hindi, Urdu and English. First I will read out to you the English version.³

There is nothing particular in these resolutions, the perusal of which should have offended our high officials on the ground that they embarrass them. If any truth based on a principle is pointed out to them, they do not relish it. If you carefully read these resolutions, the whole picture is drawn before you. I feel ashamed at what happened in Rangoon and Malaya. You must have read them in newspapers. These reports are correct. You know what was done and how the Englishmen were saved. How Indians, whether rich or poor, were discriminated and subjected to tyranny. We read only in history the fate of a civic population when an administration collapses. We are now a witness to what happened in Burma.

The Congress has been struggling against British imperialism since long before most of us were born. We have been fighting for long against this rock standing in front of us and harassing us, and now that rock has crumbled so quickly in Malaya and Burma. I wonder whether we have been fighting against the same rock. It has become difficult for me to describe this imperialism, which lacks in grandeur. I have therefore stopped uttering the name of British imperialism.

This is a picture of the weak Empire. But an imperialism becomes automatically weak when confronted with a crisis, howsoever strong its framework may be. It falls like the leaves on the advent of autumn. The happenings in Burma and Malaya have convinced me that if war reaches here, India too will meet with the same fate. The experience of the British Empire shows its weakness and lack of commonsense, both inside and outside India.

British administration not only opposes us but also commits numerous mistakes. It cannot tolerate its criticism, and therefore suppresses the news. The British get very upset about our knowledge of the facts of the situation. How inefficient they have become! They have become physically and mentally weak, and have lost their capacity to rule. It is because of this weakness of the British administration that we think of the possibility of the British administration succumbing to a crisis like in Burma. Russians, Americans and the Chinese

3. Resolutions not reproduced here.

cannot possibly come to its rescue. This makes us anxious as to what preparations we should make to meet the situation in an event of attack.

Are you aware of what happened recently in Madras? What did our high officials do when they were faced with the danger? This story has not been published in the newspapers. One day a 'reliable' spy reported to the officials in Madras that he had received the news that the Japanese were very near to the shores of Madras, and were just twenty or twenty-five miles away. The officials reacted promptly. The Governor was told to leave Madras, and the High Court was to be transferred to a safer place; and aerodrome, docks and factories were to be closed. The High Court was closed for a month. They even started destroying the port and stopped only when they realised that the news was false.

Now just think what wisdom is there in this? What is this? Is this the imperialism against which we are fighting? Can it defend us? British imperialism has ceased to be a strong force. It has now become a small power, although it is continuing as a matter of routine. But its continuance in future is impossible. Can these British remain in India by themselves or with the cooperation of America? You must understand this in order to plan a suitable action against them. It is a misfortune that while this is the right time for us to break ourselves away from the bondage, there are circumstances which keep us in suspense. The question is that of Japan.

At this moment, we have therefore to defend ourselves. It is not the question whether the British should do anything or not. If we are attacked and we are weak in offering resistance it will only help the enemy to advance further. Unfortunately, therefore, we have to put up with this maladministration. I am not casting aspersions on all the officials, but I am told by Asaf Ali, that the A.R.P. Wardens in Delhi are worse than thieves and dacoits. What are we to do in such circumstances?

It is clear that we cannot rely on them. Whatever we can do we should do, on the basis of the strength of our organisation. This organisation in Allahabad city has been making remarkable progress for some time past. But even half or one-fourth of what ought to have been done, has not been done. The time is passing away. What has happened to Burma, can happen to cities of India also. If we do not prepare ourselves, we will have to face the consequences. Why should we then not make all the preparations we can? Let us do what we can do. We cannot face big armies but we can do something at least. We can at least shoulder responsibility at the time of a crisis if we are well organised. We can keep anti-social elements under control. The British Government cannot save us. Its power will vanish as in Rangoon, which would

mean collapse of civil administration and police arrangements. If we are well organised we can save the public, otherwise there will be anarchy and whosoever has a lathi will make use of it against the weak.

You should implement seriously the Congress programme. Do not think that this programme is old and useless. It includes the programme of plying charkhas, which can be plied even during the war. Factories can be occupied by enemies, but domestic industry can continue production. This has been done effectively in China. If we are self-sufficient and economically independent, we can continue functioning even if the administration collapses. We should therefore organise ourselves and be ready for any eventuality rather than rely on the official administration. The officers instead of being responsible are the first to run away. Remember that the captain of a ship looks for the safety of the passengers first and in times of crises is the last to leave the ship. But the captains of the ship of India are like those of Burma and Malaya. Let them be what they are, let them run away, it would be better if they run thousands of miles away.

Then what should I and you do? What is our new policy? Resolutions will be moved in regard to this. You should consider them. Consider these questions. Do you stand to gain anything? Have you any policy? Have you any foundation? All these should be answered.

If your policy is not what I have stated, nothing can be done. If your policy is that of self-sufficiency and self-protection, then even a weak resolution will carry you far ahead. Today Allahabad is hotter than any other place. Before the summer is over and the rainy season sets in the situation in India will undergo a change. The world situation will change but War will not be over. There will certainly be serious events in this country. The methods of war will undergo a change, not here but round the world. We are today meeting here at this A.I.C.C. session. Only God knows whether we shall meet each other in the next session. We should not therefore forget that we have ahead before us the crucial four or five months. The time for making preparations is short. We are faced with such dangers that our debates assume a different form. The danger is at our door. In any case, we should make full preparations. Under these circumstances, I do not expect British officials to do anything. I, therefore, move these resolutions before you, not because they contain condemnation and reproach but in view of our experience of the incidents at Madras, to be prepared and not do such shameful acts as to allow the world to regard us as weak.

18. A.I.C.C. War Resolution

I

Mahatma Gandhi's draft for Working Committee, Allahabad, 27 April 1942¹

Whereas the British Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that Britain is incapable of defending India. It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. The policy of mistrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives.

Japan's quarrel is not with India. She is warring against the British Empire. India's participation in the War has not been with the

II

Draft revised by Rajendra Prasad for Working Committee, Allahabad, 27 April 1942²

Whereas the British War Cabinet's proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps have shown up British imperialism in its nakedness as never before, the A.I.C.C. has come to the following conclusions:

It is natural that whatever she does is for her own defence. There is an eternal conflict between Indian and British interests. It follows that their notions of defence would also differ. The British Government has no trust in India's political parties. The Indian Army has been maintained up till now mainly to hold India in subjugation. It has been completely segregated from the general population who can in no sense regard it as their own. This policy of distrust still continues and is the reason why national defence is not entrusted to India's elected representatives, and India rendered incapable of defending herself.

India's participation in the War has not been with the consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were free she would wish

1, 2 and 3. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. 4. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 2 May 1942. We give above three drafts presented to the Working Committee and the final draft as passed by the A.I.C.C. The first draft, prepared by Mahatma Gandhi, was sent to Allahabad through Mirabehn. For discussions on the three drafts see *post*, item 20.

III

Confidential draft by Jawaharlal for Working Committee, Allaha-bad, 1 May 1942³

In view of the imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future.

The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to greater bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of noncooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognise the independence of India or to part with any real power.

India's participation in the War was a purely British act imposed upon the Indians without the consent of their representatives. If India

IV

Final resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed by the All India Congress Committee on 1 May 1942⁴

In view of imminent peril of invasion that confronts India, and the attitude of the British Government, as shown again in the recent proposals sponsored by Sir Stafford Cripps, the All India Congress Committee has to declare afresh India's policy and to advise the people in regard to the action to be undertaken in the emergencies that may arise in the immediate future. The proposals of the British Government and their subsequent elucidation by Sir Stafford Cripps have led to great bitterness and distrust of that Government and the spirit of noncooperation with Britain has grown. They have demonstrated that even in this hour of danger, not only to India but to the cause of the United Nations, the British Government functions as an imperialist government and refuses to recognise the independence of India or to part with any real power. India's participation in the War was a purely British act imposed upon the Indian people without the consent of their representatives. While India has no quarrel with the

I

consent of the representatives of the Indian people. It was purely a British act. If India were freed her first step would probably be to negotiate with Japan. The Congress is of opinion that if the British withdrew from India, India would be able to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The A.I.C.C. is therefore of opinion that the British should withdraw from India. The plea that they should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would disappear on their withdrawal.

For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of her own safety, for the sake of India's safety and for the cause of world peace, to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

The Committee desires to assure the Japanese Government and people that India bears no enmity either towards Japan or towards any other nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. But in this fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy

II

to keep out of the War, her sympathies with victims of aggression notwithstanding. India would know also how to defend herself in the event of Japanese or any aggressor attacking India.

The plea that the British should remain in India for protecting the Indian Princes is wholly untenable. It is additional proof of their determination to maintain their hold over India. The Princes need have no fear from unarmed India.

The question of majority and minority is a creation of the British Government and would solve itself on their withdrawal.

For all these reasons the Committee appeals to Britain, for the sake of India's safety and for cause of world peace, to let go her hold on India even if she does not give up all Asiatic and African possessions.

India bears no enmity towards any foreign nation. India only desires freedom from all alien domination. In her fight for freedom the Committee is of opinion that India while welcoming universal sympathy does not stand in need of foreign military aid. Her past

III

were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the War, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the War, she would have done so as a free people fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organised on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

IV

people of any country she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to Nazism and fascism as to imperialism. If India were free she would have determined her own policy and might have kept out of the War, though her sympathies would, in any event, have been with the victims of aggression. If, however, circumstances had led her to join the War, she would have done so as a free country fighting for freedom, and her defence would have been organised on a popular basis with a national army under national control and leadership, and with intimate contacts with the people. A free India would know how to defend herself in the event of any aggressor attacking her. The present Indian army is in fact an offshoot of the British army and has been maintained till now mainly to hold India in subjection. It has been completely segregated from the general population, who can in no sense regard it as their own.

I

does not stand in need of foreign military aid. India will attain her freedom through her nonviolent strength and will retain it likewise. Therefore the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to its appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them. It is no part of the duty of those who are attacked to render any assistance to the attacker. It is their duty to offer complete noncooperation.

It is not difficult to understand the simple principle of nonviolent noncooperation:

1. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor or obey any of his orders.
2. We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.
3. If he wishes to take possession of our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.
4. If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

II

experience teaches her that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India.⁵ She therefore hopes that the British Government as also other foreign nations will remove their legions and henceforth stop their further introduction. They know fully well that there is inexhaustible manpower in India which remains untapped on account of the policy of distrust of the Indian people by the British Government. India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. India having no quarrel with Japan or any other nation, the Committee hopes that Japan will not have any designs on India. But if in spite of this Japan attacks India and Britain makes no response to her appeal the Committee would expect all those who look to Congress for guidance to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the Japanese forces and not render any assistance to them.

We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders.

We may not look to him for any favours nor fall to his bribes. But we may not bear him any malice nor wish him ill.

5. It was announced officially in April 1942 that American armies had arrived in India to assist the British war effort. Mahatma Gandhi wrote on 26 April 1942, "We know what American aid means. It amounts in the end to American influence, if not American rule, added to British. It is a tremendous price to pay for the possible success of Allied arms."

III

The essential difference between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast manpower of India herself is not utilised for the purpose. India's past experience teaches her that it is harmful to India's interest and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped, while India develops into a battleground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority.

IV

The essential difference between the imperialist and the popular conceptions of defence is demonstrated by the fact that while foreign armies are invited to India for that defence, the vast manpower of India herself is not utilised for the purpose. India's past experience teaches her that it is harmful to her interest and dangerous to the cause of her freedom to introduce foreign armies in India. It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped, while India develops into a battleground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment of her people as chattels to be disposed of by foreign authority.

I

5. In such places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our noncooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. At present our noncooperation with the British Government is limited. Were we to offer them complete noncooperation when they are actually fighting it would be tantamount to placing our country deliberately in Japanese hands. Therefore not to put any obstacle in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our noncooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. If we can judge from their recent attitude, the British Government do not need help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help only as slaves, a position we can never accept.

It is necessary for the Committee to make a clear declaration in regard to the scorched earth policy. If, in spite of our nonviolent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, &c., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Whilst noncooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily

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If he wishes to take possession of our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist him.

If he is attacked by disease or is dying of thirst and seeks our aid we may not refuse it.

In places where the British and Japanese forces are fighting our noncooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacles in the way of the British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our noncooperation with the Japanese. Neither may we assist the British in any active manner. Judging from their attitude, the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. They desire our help as slaves, a position we can never accept.

If, in spite of our nonviolent resistance, any part of the country falls into Japanese hands we may not destroy our crops, water-supply, &c., if only because it will be our endeavour to regain them. The destruction of war material is another matter and may under certain circumstances be a military necessity. But it can never be the Congress policy to destroy what belongs to or is of use to the masses.

Direct noncooperation against the Japanese forces will necessarily be limited. Its complete and lasting

III

The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the recent experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or the United Nations.

While India has no quarrel with the people of any country, she has repeatedly declared her antipathy to fascism and Nazism as to imperialism. The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion of any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation might be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take form of nonviolent noncooperation as the British Government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect the people of India to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them.

IV

The A.I.C.C. is convinced that India will attain her freedom through her own strength and will retain it likewise. The present crisis, as well as the experience of the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, make it impossible for the Congress to consider any schemes or proposals which retain, even in a partial measure, the British control and authority in India. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety, and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. It is on the basis of independence alone that India can deal with Britain or other nations.

The Committee repudiates the idea that freedom can come to India through interference or invasion by any foreign nation, whatever the professions of that nation may be. In case an invasion takes place, it must be resisted. Such resistance can only take the form of nonviolent noncooperation as the British Government has prevented the organisation of national defence by the people in any other way. The Committee would therefore expect the people of India to offer complete nonviolent noncooperation to the invading forces and not to render any assistance to them. We may not bend the knee to the aggressor nor obey any of his orders. We may not look to him for favours nor fall to his bribes. If he wishes to take possession of

I

be limited to a comparatively small number and must succeed if it is complete and genuine, the true building up of Swaraj consists in the millions of India wholeheartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this national building work, freedom must remain a dream and unattainable by either nonviolence or violence.

The A.I.C.C. is of opinion that it is harmful to India's interests and dangerous to the cause of India's freedom to introduce foreign soldiers in India. It therefore appeals to the British Government to remove these foreign legions and henceforth to stop further introduction. It is a crying shame to bring foreign troops in spite of India's inexhaustible manpower and is a proof of the immorality that British imperialism is.

II

success and also the true building up of Swaraj depend on the millions of India wholeheartedly working the constructive programme. Without it the whole nation cannot rise from its age-long torpor. Whether the British remain or not it is our duty always to wipe out unemployment, to bridge the gulf between rich and poor, to banish communal strife, to exorcise the demon of untouchability, to reform dacoits and save the people from them. If crores of people do not take a living interest in this nation-building work, freedom in terms of the masses must remain a dream and unattainable by either nonviolence or violence.

III

The success of such a policy of noncooperation and nonviolent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme, and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.

IV

our homes and our fields we will refuse to give them up even if we have to die in the effort to resist them. In places wherein the British and the invading forces are fighting our noncooperation will be fruitless and unnecessary. Not to put any obstacle in the way of British forces will often be the only way of demonstrating our noncooperation with the invader. Judging from their attitude the British Government do not need any help from us beyond our non-interference. The success of such a policy of noncooperation and nonviolent resistance to the invader will largely depend on the intensive working out of the Congress constructive programme and more especially the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection in all parts of the country.

19. Evacuees from Burma¹

I have received the following telegram from Shri Arun Kumar Chanda² of Silchar:

"Information received today that evacuees are being moved through Silchar and Cachar across extremely difficult hills rendered almost impossible owing to heavy monsoon rains. Mister Aney assured that this route would be used as the last resort. Kindly intervene."

This piece of news is distressing as this means even greater suffering for our countrymen who are coming away from Burma. I trust that the evacuees will be brought over by other routes, where non-official workers are given full scope to help the evacuees.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 30 April 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Not printed in newspapers.
2. (1899-1947); founder-principal of Guru Charan College, Silchar, 1935; President, Silchar District Congress Committee, 1937-47; imprisoned during the Quit India movement, 1942-45.

20. Discussions of the Working Committee on War Resolution¹

Jawaharlalji: Gandhiji's draft² is an approach which needs careful consideration. Independence means, among other things, the withdrawal of British troops. It is proper; but has it any meaning our demanding withdrawal. Nor can they reasonably do it even if they recognise independence. Withdrawal of troops and the whole apparatus of civil administration will create a vacuum which cannot be filled up immediately.

If we said to Japan that her fight was with British imperialism and not us she would say "we are glad the British army is withdrawn; we recognise your independence. But we want certain facilities now. We shall defend you against aggression. We want aerodromes, freedom to pass our troops through your country. This is necessary in self-defence." They might seize strategic points and proceed to Iraq, &c. The masses

1. Extracts from the minutes of the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee from 27 April to 1 May 1942. Printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, (London, 1971), Volume II, pp. 158-164. This note was seized by the police after their raid on the A.I.C.C. office at Allahabad on 26 May 1942. It was released to the press on 4 August 1942.
2. See *ante*, item 18, draft I.

won't be touched if only the strategic points are captured. Japan is an imperialist country. Conquest of India is in their plan. If Bapu's approach is accepted we become passive partners of the Axis powers. This approach is contrary to the Congress policy for the last two years and a half. The Allied countries will have a feeling that we are their enemies.

Kripalaniji: The draft was a declaration of their stand. England and America might put what interpretation they liked but they (the Congress) had no designs against them.

Maulana Sahib: What is our position? Shall we tell the British Government to go and allow the Japanese and Germans to come or do we want the British Government to stay and stem the new aggression?

Pantji: I want the right of self-government and we shall exercise it as we like. If the British troops and the rest must withdraw let them do so by all means and we shall shift for ourselves.

Jawaharlalji: A draft like this weakens their (the British Government's) position. They will treat India as an enemy country and reduce it to dust and ashes. They will do here what they did in Rangoon.

Vallabhbhai Patel: The draft says to the British "you have proved your utter incompetence. You cannot defend India. We cannot defend it either because you won't let us to do. But if you withdraw there is a chance for us."

Asaf Ali: The draft asks us to accept nonviolence for all time.

Achyut Patwardhan: It was put to Gandhiji. He said that the Congress can take the stand that under existing circumstances nonviolence was the best policy.

Jawaharlal Nehru: The whole background of the draft is one which will inevitably make the world think that we are passively lining up with the Axis powers. The British are asked to withdraw. After the withdrawal we are to negotiate with Japan and possibly come to some terms with her. These terms may include a large measure of civil control by us, a certain measure of military control by them, passage of armies through India, &c.

Kripalaniji: Why should it mean passage of armies through India &c. Just as we call upon the British and the Americans to withdraw their armies so also we ask others to keep out of our frontiers. If they do not, we fight.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Whether you will like it or not, the exigencies of the war situation will compel them to make India a battle ground. In sheer self-defence they cannot afford to keep out. They will walk through the country. You can't stop it by nonviolent noncooperation. Most of the population will not be affected by the march. Individuals may resist in a symbolic way. The Japanese armies will go to Iraq, Persia, &c., throttle China and make the Russian situation more difficult.

The British will refuse our demand for military reasons apart from others. They can't allow India to be used by Japan against them. Our reaction in the event of refusal will be a passive, theoretical lining up with Axis powers. Japan may have an excuse for attack. We get involved in a hopeless logical quandary. We get hostility from every other element outside the Axis powers. Japan will occupy strategic points. We get no chance to offer mass C.D. Our policy of sympathy with one group is completely changed.

So far as the main action is concerned there is no difficulty about Bapu's draft. But the whole thought and background of the draft is one of favouring Japan. It may not be conscious. Three factors influence our decisions in the present emergency. (i) Indian freedom; (ii) sympathy for certain larger causes, (iii) probable outcome of the War—who is going to win? It is Gandhiji's feeling that Japan and Germany will win. This feeling unconsciously governs his decision. The approach in the draft is different from mine.

Achyut Patwardhan: I agree with Jawaharlalji's background but there are certain difficulties. The British Government is behaving in a suicidal manner. If we do not take decisions Jawaharlalji's attitude will lead to abject and unconditional cooperation with British machinery which must collapse. If the battle of India is to be fought by Wavell, we shall do ourselves discredit if we attach ourselves to him. We talk of allying ourselves with the Allied nations. I doubt if America is a progressive force. The existence of the American army in India is not a fact which improves our situation. I was opposed to the Poona offer but not to talks with Cripps. Jawaharlalji's statements after the negotiations broke down distressed me. The trend of thought it disclosed lands us in a position which obliges us to offer unconditional cooperation to the British. Our cooperation with the British is an invitation to Japan.

Rajendra Babu: We cannot produce the proper atmosphere unless we adopt Bapu's draft. The Government has closed the door on armed resistance. We have only unarmed resistance to offer. We have therefore to strengthen Bapu's hands.

Govind Ballabh Pant. There is no difference of opinion so far as nonviolence is concerned. There may be two opinions as to its effectiveness. Nonviolent noncooperation is not meant to be a demonstration. It is designed to prevent invasion or resist occupation, what will be our attitude to armed resistance? Shall we assist it or at least do nothing to hamper it?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It retains the approach in Bapu's original draft.³ The approach is a variation from the attitude we have taken up about the Allies. At least I have committed myself to that sympathy 100 per cent. It would be dishonourable for me to resign from that position. There is no reason why that choice should arise. But it has arisen somewhat in this approach. The portion of the draft about resistance has some substance. The portion about minorities, princes, is unrealistic. We go on thinking in terms of what was and not what is and that is a dangerous thing in a rapidly changing situation. There is no difference among us about (i) our reactions to government, (ii) our total inability to cooperate with the government. Our programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection helps the government but that cannot be helped, (iii) we do not embarrass the British war-effort because that in itself would mean aid to the invader. We agree on these points but we have different ways of getting at them. It is true that since my approach is different my emphasis too would be different.

Pantji: One test to apply to the draft is: whether it is consistent with our previous resolutions. The language about the condemnation of Cripps proposals is highly exaggerated. If the proposals were so bad why did we spend so much time over them? My attitude today is: we must do our utmost to defend the country and swallow many things. If I can't cooperate with the British it is because it is not consistent with our dignity. But the approach in the draft makes every soldier I see my enemy.

Asaf Ali: The draft will(not?) make any effective appeal to the Axis powers. Telling the British to withdraw will do nobody any good.

Bhulabhai Desai: No resolution is called for. We passed at Wardha (one?) which expressed our definite position. The resolution is made in an unreal way. It is inconsistent with our previous stand. We have said that if offered an opportunity we shall side with the Allies.

3. The reference is to the modified draft of Rajendra Prasad. See *ante*, item 18, draft II.

Rajaji: I do not think the changed draft is different from the original. We appeal to Britain and Japan. The appeal to Britain will fail but certain tangible results will follow. The entire policy of the Congress will be reinterpreted and the new interpretation will go terribly against us. Japan will say "excellent".

I do not agree that if Britain goes away India will have some scope for organising itself even if Japan should make some headway. Japan will fill the vacuum created by the British withdrawal. Our reaction to evils of Britain should not make us lose our sense of perspective. It is no use getting upset on small matters. Do not run into the arms of Japan, which is what the resolution comes to.

Dr. Pattabhi: It is a comprehensive and appropriate draft. A time has come when we must realise ourselves. After the rejection of Cripps proposals we must reconsider our attitude and restate our position. We have varied our position from time to time during the time the War has been on. Poona was a variation from the old position. Bombay was a variation from Poona. Bombay was followed by C.D. and C.D. by Cripps.

Sarojini Naidu: The changed draft is much better than the original. There is however a great deal of unnecessary matter in the resolution. The appeal is a rhetorical gesture. It is however good as an expression of our extreme disgust and dislike and hatred of the British Government.

The appeal to Japan is a useless gesture. India is a part of the map they have drawn.

I agree with the nonviolent noncooperation part of the resolution. It can be recast keeping the substance of the original.

The draft is a narrowing of sympathies not consistent with the position we have taken up.

I do not like foreign soldiers. The portion dealing with them is good.

Bishwanath Das⁴: I see two conflicting views in the Committee. This division of opinion is fatal at this juncture. I generally agree with the draft. The Cripps proposals if accepted would have kept us in permanent bondage. The appeal to Britain to withdraw is very proper. We can tell them that neither will they defend us nor allow us to defend ourselves.

4. (b. 1889); a leading Congressman from Orissa; Chief Minister of Orissa, 1937-39; member, Constituent Assembly, 1947-51; Governor of U.P., 1962-67; Chief Minister of Orissa, 1971-72.

The protest against the introduction of American soldiers in the country is also proper. They have brought in troops from Dominions and other foreign nations. This is highly objectionable and dangerous.

Bardoloi: One portion of the draft is operative and another ideological. If we lay emphasis on the operative portion the differences will be greatly minimised. For joint action I should be prepared to delete the portion which deals with the ideological background. We are already in the danger zone. This is no time for ideological discussions. Let us concentrate on the present action which cannot be anything else than nonviolent noncooperation.

Satyamurti: The changed draft is an improvement. I do not agree with the objection to the entry of foreign soldiers. India may defend herself even with the aid of foreign soldiers. I think we must make an approach to the Muslim League.

Achyut Patwardhan: I am in general agreement with the draft. The open-door policy is at an end. The resolution emphasises a factor which has been emphasised by every intelligent man, i.e., the war is lost unless the people are in it. The War is an imperialist war. Our policy can be that we take no sides. The world is in the grip of fear complex. I would reconsider the position if the Allies could defeat the Axis. But I see clearly that Britain is going towards the deep. We want to create neutrality. Do not look to Japan or Britain.

Jairamdasji: The criticism that the draft is pro-Japanese is wrong. Opposition to the Japanese invasion is there in the draft.

The mention of foreign armies in the draft is very appropriate. The Indian history bears ample testimony of the highly undesirable consequences which foreign armies have led to. The draft creates an atmosphere of neutrality. The attempt is worth making.

Vallabhbhai Patel: I see that there are two distinct opinions in the Committee. We have ever since the outbreak of War tried to pull together. But it may not be possible on this occasion. Gandhiji has taken a definite stand. If his background is unsuitable to some members of the Committee there is the other background which is unsuitable to us. The first four or five paragraphs of the draft is a reply to the Cripps mission. Cripps is a clever fellow. He has gone about saying that his mission has not been a failure. The draft is a perfect reply to his propaganda.

I am not in favour of making any approach to Jinnah. We have made repeated attempts and courted many insults. The Congress

today is reeling under two blows, one Cripps's and the other Rajaji's resolutions⁵ have done us enormous harm.

I have placed myself in the hands of Gandhiji. I feel that he is instinctively right, the lead he gives in all critical situations.

In Bombay, at the time of the A.I.C.C. meeting, there was a difference in approach but the door to negotiation was closed. In Bardoli it was made clear that the door was still open and our sympathies were with the Allies. It is time the door is finally closed after the repeated insults heaped upon us. I agree with the draft before us. If there is any pro-fascist hint in the draft let it be removed.

Acharya Narendra Dev: I do not agree with the view that war is one and indivisible. The aims of Russia and China are not identical with those of Britain and America. If it is one we should join the War and side with Britain. Our position has not been that we want power because without it we cannot kindle the national spirit, our position has been that if the War was a people's war and there was proof of it in action we are willing to throw in our weight on the side of democracies.

It is necessary to counteract the mischievous propaganda of Cripps. Cripps has been saying that internal differences have prevented a settlement. Rajaji has strengthened his hands. Japanese threat has also influenced our attitude to Britain. It has led us to even modify Poona. We have to make it clear that Japanese threat has not unnerved us. We can tell the British to go, leaving us to our fate.

Whatever unreality there is in Indian policies is due to the British rule. Let it go and the unreality will disappear.

I am not interested in defeating Hitlerite Germany, I am more interested in war aims and peace aims.

Maulana Sahib: The discussion has been useful. But it is not clear to me, the differences that divide the two groups.

Cripps was a great hope. He came here with the reputation of a radical. But he proved a great disappointment. He made things worse. Cripps in his statements after the failure of negotiations has emphasised two points: (i) his mission has proved the sincerity of the intentions of the British Government towards India, (ii) the anti-Japanese front is the outcome of his mission.

All this is false propaganda. Great Britain has made it impossible for us to defend our country. But we have something to do about the Japanese aggression.

5. See *ante*, p. 239.

It is my firm belief that nationalism is the only religion for a subject nation. If I feel that Japan was better than Britain and her invasion was for the good of India I would have said so in public. But it is not so. Gandhiji's prescription is the only alternative though I doubt its effectiveness.⁶

6. Rajendra Prasad's draft was passed at the morning sitting of the Working Committee on 1 May 1942. But at the afternoon sitting on Maulana Azad's request the supporters of Rajendra Prasad's draft accepted Jawaharlal's draft.

21. On Amendments of the War Resolution¹

I would like you to refer to an amendment moved by Dr. Choithram Gidwani.² But I would suggest that the mover's intention could be better expressed by the addition of a separate sentence at the end of the sixth paragraph to read: "They desire our help only as slaves—a position we can never accept." The mover and the seconder of the resolution have agreed to the addition of this sentence.

Perhaps the wording of the resolution can be improved.³ But what matters is the principle behind the resolution. There is no use indulging in catchwords and catch-phrases like fascism, Communism and imperialism. Mere catch-phrases would solve no problems. We have to bear in mind the awful aspect of the world picture. We have to consider the picture as a whole. People sometimes may imagine that I wander away in international matters a little too much, but we have to consider the picture in its entirety. If I wander, it is because the affairs of other nations are too much bound with our own. It is not a simple question of India *versus* England. We have, in fact, to decide our course and lay down a foreign policy for ourselves. There is no sense in blinding ourselves with our differences with Britain. We should

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. session, Allahabad, 1 May 1942. From *National Herald*, 3 May 1942.
2. Choithram Gidwani suggested that the words "beyond our non-interference" at the end of the last paragraph be substituted by "except as slaves".
3. Many amendments were suggested. For example, Uday Shankar wanted removal of the word 'nonviolence' wherever it occurred in the last paragraph; Swami Krishnanand's amendment sought noncooperation with all activities of the British Government; K.M. Ashraf moved an amendment suggesting replacement of the words "and might have kept out of the war" by "she would join with the people of China, U.S.S.R., America and Britain to fight the menace of fascism."

not just for that matter like to antagonize the rest of the world. We want one side to win and Britain happens to be on that side. We also feel that the victory of the other side would prove disastrous, so we have to strike a course between these two sentiments. On the one side is our differences with Britain. On the other side some of us have the fear of the Japanese and of the consequences of an Axis victory. To think indifferently that the new aggressors might prove better for us or at least not worse would be wrong. Our aim should be to face all aggression. Passivity would be dangerous. A Russian defeat would be a great disaster not only for India, but for everybody.

22. On Rajagopalachari's Resolution¹

I oppose Rajaji's resolution² for many reasons, but chiefly because it is not intended to bring about any settlement but the whole aim is that some kind of provisional administration should be set up. I detest this objective. I do not think that Mr. Jagat Narain Lal's resolution³ is contrary to the Working Committee's resolution, but I want to make it perfectly clear that in no way do I want to change the position as clarified by the Working Committee. This position has been one of the Congress going out of its way and promising every conceivable safeguard which, since the dawn of history, any country has dreamt of giving to sections of its people.

The whole idea of Pakistan must hurt anyone who has grown up and worked in India. It is becoming intolerable. I doubt if any reasonable or sensible person thought of Pakistan as a reasonable and sensible proposal, unless that person was also at the same time opposed to the whole idea of Indian independence. I have heard it said that a Muslim League spokesman had made it clear to Sir Stafford Cripps during the recent negotiations that there should be no National Government and that it should not have full powers till some demands of the Muslims were recognised. This is a position which is totally intolerable. With

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. session, Allahabad, 2 May 1942. From *The Hindu*, 3 May 1942.
2. Rajagopalachari's resolution recommended that Congress should acknowledge the Muslim League's claim for separation and on this basis invite the League for consultations aimed at securing the installation of a National Government to meet the emergency.
3. Jagat Narain Lal's resolution opposed any proposal to disintegrate India.

people who put forward such proposals, I can have no compromise. But I want the British Government to assist me in opposing the idea of Pakistan. So far as I am concerned, I would be damned forever. The Muslim League does not represent a great majority of the Indian Muslims but it does represent a section of them and I have tried my level best to win that body over, but what is the use of doing anything to ally myself with the people who are always putting forward petty demands. I stand on the platform of Indian independence.

23. To R. Jumabhoy¹

Allahabad
May 5, 1942

Dear Mr. Jumabhoy,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letters. As you know, we have been following closely the fate of the evacuees from Burma and Malaya² and recently the A.I.C.C. passed a resolution on the subject.³ I did not wish to trouble you to come here at the time as the data in our possession was sufficient and more than sufficient.

I learnt some time ago that a non-official committee consisting of people from Burma and Malaya was being formed in New Delhi to deal with the evacuees' problems.⁴ I do not know how far this matter has proceeded. I think it is a good move and may be of considerable help.

Please do not hesitate to write to me if I can be of any service to you.

I am going out of Allahabad to various places tonight and shall be away for a fortnight.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. It was reported on 4 May 1942 that about 2,50,000 refugees had come to India from Burma.
3. See *ante*, item 16.
4. S. Satyamurti, President of the Indian Overseas Central Association, met Aney on 4 May 1942 and discussed matters relating to the formation of a non-official central committee to deal with questions concerning Indian evacuees from Burma, Malaya and other countries.

24. To Mulkraj¹

Allahabad
May 5, 1942

Dear Mulkrajji,²

I have your letter of the 25th April. I have also had a letter on this subject from Mahatma Gandhi.³

I think that there should be no objection to the Jallianwala Bagh being used for purposes which are of help to the public. Therefore the proposal of the Deputy Commissioner to make a tank in a corner of the park may be accepted. The cost of making the tank and its upkeep will naturally be borne by the government.

As for other air-raid precautions, we should help in these also in so far as possible. There is no objection to proper trenches or dugouts being made. I might point out, however, that expert opinion is entirely opposed now to the ordinary slit trenches that have been dug in certain cities. Experience in Rangoon and elsewhere has shown that these trenches sometimes become death-traps. People get suffocated in them owing to over-crowding and then run out and are machinegunned. It would be much better for regular shelters to be made which are wide enough for convenient movement and are a sufficient protection against everything except direct hits from big bombs. There is also the danger of open trenches being filled with water during the rains and thus becoming homes for the malaria mosquito. Further, these trenches may be used by the public as latrines. It will be difficult to clean them or keep them in proper order.

All these are objections to the form of trenches to be dug. You may inform the Deputy Commissioner of these objections and tell him that in Calcutta and elsewhere other methods are being adopted. So far as we are concerned, we are perfectly prepared to allow the Jallianwala Bagh to be used for the provision of shelters during air raids. There is no objection on our part to such a use. It is understood that the cost of erection of any shelter or anything else will be borne by the government.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. Papers, File No. G-37/1937, N.M.M.L.

2. Secretary of the Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Trust, Amritsar.

3. With his letter addressed to Mahatma Gandhi, Mulkraj had forwarded two letters received from the Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, seeking permission to construct a water storage tank in a corner of the Jallianwala Bagh for use during air raids to extinguish fire. On 29 April 1942, Mahatma Gandhi, while forwarding the correspondence to Jawaharlal, had asked him to reply on his behalf after consulting Malaviyaji and desired that permission be granted.

25. To Florence Wedgwood¹

Allahabad
May 5, 1942

My dear Lady Wedgwood,²

It was very good of you to send me your letter dated the 11th January³ which I appreciated greatly. It is a little difficult to write when one does not know how and when a letter might travel. But I am writing these few lines in the hope that they might reach you some time or other.

As I write, conditions have worsened in every way and, to my sorrow, the feeling against Britain is greater here than ever. Sir Stafford Cripps's visit has led to this, though I have no doubt that he had no such intention. At any moment, India may have experience of all the horrors of a modern war. We realise all this and the future is dark. With the example of Burma and Malaya before them, it amazes me how the British Government can think so complacently about conditions in India and talk in the language of long ago. They do not realise that it is quite impossible to impose anything upon India in her present mood, nor do they realise that their continual encouragement of separatist tendencies angers the vast majority of the people, without giving them the goodwill of even a minority. I suppose that all of us will have to face, as best we may, the consequences of past actions. They pursue us and we cannot shed this burden of the past, especially when it is carried on to the present.

You are perfectly right in saying that a great deal of the British attitude is due to a deep-seated conviction of complacent superiority and also to a feeling of possessing India. It is this which Indians cannot tolerate.

Whatever the future may hold for us, it is good to have friends who do not allow themselves to be carried away by the sentiment of the moment and who try to stick to certain principles.

With my regards and good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Wife of 1st Baron, J.C. Wedgwood.

3. In her letter of 11 January 1942, she endorsed Jawaharlal's attitude towards the British Government and wished that the Congress would stand firm and refuse cooperation till India attained independence.

26. To Abul Kalam Azad¹

New Delhi
May 8, 1942

My dear Maulana,

As I was on the point of leaving Lucknow last evening your two letters² reached me. I had no time then to consult many of my colleagues. I had a talk, however, with Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and one or two others. *En route* to Delhi I met Paliwal, our provincial President.

We are all agreeable to help you as far as we can in the matter of making arrangements for evacuee children from Calcutta. It was not possible to form a committee immediately for the purpose because our members had dispersed. But this can be done a little later. Meanwhile I have asked Rafi Ahmed to deal with this matter in cooperation with our provincial office and with Sucheta Kripalani and others.

This work will largely be women's work. We have just appointed a women's sub-committee of the P.C.C. and we can ask them to help fully in the matter. I am writing to Sucheta about it. In order, however, to avoid duplication, I would suggest your sending directions to Rafi Ahmed directly for the present.

Many questions arise and before any arrangements are made definite particulars should be obtained about the children concerned — their number, their ages, sex, kind of living they have been accustomed to, etc. etc. It is possible to spread out a number of them in existing families, chiefly Bengali, or we can keep most of them in large hostels, or both these methods can be adopted. Perhaps it will be better if you send for Rafi Ahmed and Sucheta to Calcutta so that they can discuss the matter with you and at the same time see for themselves what has to be done.

As arranged, I am leaving tomorrow night for Lahore.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Letters not available.

27. Tribute to the Soviet Union¹

I am glad to learn that a conference under the auspices of the Friends of the Soviet Union is being held at Jalesarganj in the Pratapgarh district under the presidency of my friend and colleague Rafi Ahmed Kidwai.² Such conferences are desirable as they draw the attention of our people to some of the magnificent achievements of the Soviet Union.

People may differ on many matters, political or economic; but few can withhold admiration from the Soviet Union for its human and cultural achievements. It would be a tragedy if their achievements ended in the storm of War. Therefore, it is right that people holding different opinions on other subjects should meet together on a common platform to pay tribute to the Soviet Union for the great human advances it has made. I wish success to the conference.

1. Statement to the press, Lucknow, 8 May 1942. *National Herald*, 9 May 1942.
2. Held on 16-17 May 1942.

28. Communists and Congressmen¹

Question: What is your attitude towards those Communists who on their release from jail have started a campaign for active support to the war effort?²

Jawaharlal Nehru: I think some Congressmen are too critical of each other. I want Congressmen not to mind what the Communists do. This is not the time for discussions; the need of the hour is unity. I want Congressmen to strengthen their organisation. Those who are anxious to oppose the Communists may do so, but nothing should be done which may affect the strength of the Congress.

1. Interview at Amritsar railway station, 10 May 1942. From *The Hindu*, 12 May 1942 and *The Tribune*, 11 May 1942.
2. In a statement on 9 May 1942, the Communists released from Campbellpur Jail called upon the Indian people to join hands in the war efforts of the government to defeat the fascist invaders.

Q: What are your views in regard to Mian Iftikharuddin's views about Pakistan?³ Can he advocate his views as President of the provincial Congress committee?

JN: Everyone has freedom to express his views in any manner he likes, but if anyone propagates such views, he is not correct. The provincial Congress is competent to take notice of such views if such views have been expressed in his capacity as President of the Congress.

Q: Is this War, a people's war or an imperialist war?

JN: It is neither a people's war nor an imperialist war. In one respect it is people's war for Russia, China and England. For the Indians it is not a war of the people.

Q: What is being done to release the remaining detenus?

JN: We have urged the Punjab Government a number of times to realise their responsibility in this matter.

3. On 9 May 1942, Iftikharuddin stated that while he stood for freedom and unity he had supported Rajagopalachari's resolution on Pakistan at the A.I.C.C. session as no community could be forced to remain in the Union of India against its wishes, although secession would not be in the interests of the Muslims. Unity by nonviolent means was possible only if the right of secession was recognised.

29. To Louis Arthur Johnson¹

Lahore
11th May 1942

Dear Colonel Johnson,
I find that I shall probably not be able to reach you in time if I write from Kulu where I am going. Therefore I have written out something here. It has been written in great haste and yet it is very long. It is not the kind of thing you wanted but I felt that my suggesting some

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

formula would be of little use, especially without consulting my colleagues.² I wanted to put the background before you in so far as I could. I am afraid I have done a bad job of it.

I do hope you are much better now and have left the hospital.

I am going to the mountains early tomorrow by automobile. It will take me a day and a half to get there.

The messenger who is taking this letter will return from Delhi the same night and follow me to my mountain retreat. So if you care to send anything through him, that would reach me safely.

All good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Louis Johnson had urged the State Department on 28 April that a joint statement of the Pacific war aims be issued by the United States, Britain and China. Further he cabled a draft declaration on 4 May 1942 urging that the British Government issue it. In this draft he had suggested that the Viceroy's Executive Council be converted into a National Government with representatives drawn from the Congress and the Muslim League. Both the communications were sent to Jawaharlal when the A.I.C.C. met at Allahabad, and Jawaharlal promised to send a note. Johnson's suggestion later was turned down by the State Department and the draft was not forwarded to London. For Jawaharlal's note see the following item.

30. Note on the Indian Background¹

It is exceedingly difficult to find a formula today which will satisfy Indian nationalism on the one hand and keep the British imperialist structure in India more or less intact. Between the two there is ineradicable and permanent conflict, not only due to historical causes and past events, but to present conditions and day-to-day happenings. The two cannot exist together or cooperate with each other, for each dislikes and distrusts the other and is afraid of it. So far the British structure has been completely dominant, checked only by a fear of going too far in suppressing the nationalist movement, which is strong enough to give an infinity of trouble which would undoubtedly affect the Indian army also.

1. Confidential note for Louis Johnson, Lahore, 11 May 1942. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

The failure of the Cripps mission has undoubtedly made the position much worse and any compromise harder. Apparently we came near at one time to a working arrangement for the present, but in reality the gulf was very far from being bridged, and this became apparent as soon as basic matters, involving real transfer of power, were discussed. In the recent history of India, there has not been such a combination of fiercely anti-Indian freedom elements in the British Government as we have had during the past two years and still have today. Churchill and Amery and Linlithgow and the leading members of the Government of India are hopelessly reactionary so far as Indian opinion is concerned. Churchill deals with a much wider sphere and holds his present position because of a variety of reasons. But Amery and the others represent directly the British Government's Indian policy and this has been, during the past two and a half years especially, quite amazingly offensive to Indian sentiment and hostile to everything that Indian nationalism stands for. It has deliberately created or aggravated problems in India which make any solution next to impossible, unless the whole basic structure and approach are changed. There may be and are conflicts of opinion in India among ourselves, but there is general unanimity that the present British Government and its high officials are an intolerable imposition which are, consciously or unconsciously, leading India to ruin. Every disruptionist and reactionary element has been encouraged and assurances given to it, which are now held up as barriers to Indian freedom, and we are told that no change can take place except in the framework of those assurances and of the present structure. The course of the War, especially in Malaya and Burma, and happenings in India, have convinced Indians of all shades of opinion, including those in Government service, that the present governmental structure is wholly incompetent to deal with any crisis, much less the overwhelming crisis that confronts us today. Corruption and racial discrimination are rampant even in high government circles. The three hundred thousand evacuees and refugees from Malaya and Burma to India are full of bitterness against the government on account of the ill-treatment they have received at its hands. War involves suffering and privation, but the Indian masses have patiently endured these even in peace time for generations past. It was not suffering and misery that angered them but the callous and discriminatory treatment accorded to them.

The conviction has thus grown and is widespread today that the British Government and its agents in India are so full of hatred for the idea of Indian freedom, that they would rather risk losing the War, and consequently their Empire, rather than part willingly with power in India in favour of representative Indians. This seems a foolish and absurd

assumption and yet it has reasons behind it. Even basic war industries have been prevented from growing in India for fear, openly stated, that they might come in the way of British industrial interests after the War. Amery, it is well remembered in India, was an ardent advocate of Japanese aggression in Manchuria, saying frankly that if they condemned Japan they would have to condemn the British record in India.² A very prominent member of the Government of India stated publicly that he preferred Nazis and fascists to Indians whom he had put in concentration camps for their opposition to British policy in India.³ And this during this War when Britain was fighting Germany and Italy.

This attitude of mind exhibits an astonishing complacency and a total blindness to facts and reality and the interests of the War, also an unreasoning hatred of Indian freedom and those who stand for it.

It is not surprising that this attitude should produce powerful reactions among the Indian people, especially with the background of hostility and conflict which has always been there. Sir Stafford Cripps's visit and his failure, demonstrated still further that individuals, however well-intentioned, do not count if they are compelled to function within the framework of an antiquated imperialist machine. A sense of hopelessness and frustration has grown and the feeling that nothing can be expected from Britain's Government, unless that government itself undergoes a basic sea-change. National pride and self-respect have demanded that no further approaches be made to the British Government, for each such attempt has led to further humiliation and insult. The future is dark with perils but no peril can justify spiritual degradation and submission, and a willing acceptance of the position of a slave.

This may or may not be a realistic attitude, but it must be realised that this is the attitude of the Indian people as a whole. This is not confined to members of the National Congress; it includes members of the Muslim League and other organizations, Indians in government service, and the mass of people who are normally non-political. To ignore this fundamental background is lack of realism.

The strongest sentiment in India is inevitably nationalism and the desire for freedom and this is felt by people differing among themselves on other matters. One of its manifestations is anti-British feeling—not affecting individuals but the system. Gradually, however, as the nationalist movement has grown in power and has widened its outlook, it has developed an international approach to Indian and world problems.

2. The reference is to his statement in the House of Commons on 27 February 1933. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 29.

3. Reginald Maxwell, the Home Member, had made this remark on 12 February 1940. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, p. 551.

During the last ten years or more it has condemned repeatedly fascist and Nazi aggressions. It was strongly opposed to Japanese aggression in Manchuria and later in other parts of China, to the Italian conquest of Ethiopia, to fascism in Spain, to Munich, etc. Popular sentiment was thus trained by tens of thousands of meetings to become anti-fascist, anti-Nazi, and anti-Japanese so far as China was concerned. With China there was deep sympathy.

But all this internationalism was to some extent superficial, the basic sentiment being nationalism. So long as the two did not come into conflict with each other, there was no difficulty. But if there appeared to be a conflict, nationalism came out on top and a feeling of isolationism became dominant.

Nevertheless when the European war started in September 1939, internationalism was strong enough to colour our vision and we were anxious and eager to play our part on the international stage. This part could, however, only be played by a free India which had got rid of its complexes due to alien domination, and could then cooperate with Britain and other nations. In our innocence we thought that the terrific impact of World War would shake the British Government out of its ruts and enable it to view the Indian problem in an entirely new perspective. The War itself and the desirability of winning to its side the millions of India, and powerfully influencing Asiatic and world opinion, led to this inevitable conclusion. But to our dismay and surprise there was no change at all in the British Government's attitude and, if there was a change, it was for the worse. We made several approaches subsequently, on each occasion to suffer a rebuff. Meanwhile, the government's policy became progressively one of disruption in India and of the suppression of nationalist and progressive opinion. The gulf widened, and internationalism receded into the background. Nationalism and isolationism dominated public opinion. Nevertheless our sympathy for certain causes represented by the Allied nations prevented us from deliberately embarrassing in any way the war effort of the government. We could not cooperate with it or associate ourselves with it, as the only cooperation left open to us was that of slaves and underlings, but still we went out of our way to avoid embarrassment, although public opinion became increasingly bitter. It was not difficult for us, if we so chose, to cause the utmost embarrassment, and indeed to upset the War effort completely both in the army proper and in production. We discouraged strikes in factories. This attempt at wholesale embarrassment would have involved the Indian people also in great misery but they would have faced that, if the check of our international sympathies had not operated.

Dear Sir Stafford,

On the 2nd April I sent you the resolution of the Executive Working Committee of the Congress ~~and~~ containing their views on the tentative proposals put forward by you on behalf of the British Government. In this resolution we expressed our dissent from several important and far-reaching proposals for the future. Further consideration of these proposals has only strengthened us in our conviction that in regard to them, and we should like to repeat that we cannot ~~or~~ accept them ~~in the~~ as suggested. The Working Committee's resolution gives expression to our various conclusions relating to them which we reached after the most earnest consideration.

That resolution, however, emphasized the gravity of the present situation and stated that ~~any~~ the ultimate decision that we might later would be governed by the changes made in the present. The overriding problem before all of us, and more especially before all Indians, is the defence of the country from aggression and invasion. The future, important as it is, will depend on what happens in the next few months. We were therefore prepared to do without any assurances for this uncertain future, hoping that through our sacrifices in defence of our country we could lay the solid ^{and enduring} foundations for a free and independent India. We contributed,



WITH NICHOLAS ROERICH, KULU, MAY 1942

So the balance between nationalism and internationalism has varied during these years. The Pacific war with its threat to India forced us to think in new terms of self-defence against an invader, and we made every effort to find a way out of the deadlock, so that we could organize a people's defence. That failed and the result has been a swing back to intense nationalism and added bitterness against British authority in India.

This result is evidenced to some extent by the resolutions of the All India Congress Committee recently passed in Allahabad.

The main resolution deals with two points: our complete inability to cooperate with Britain because we are unable to cooperate with any country as slaves and subject people. The other point deals with non-violent resistance to an invader. This latter point has led to the criticism that we are practically inviting the Japanese or, at any rate, throwing up the sponge.⁴ This is based on an entire misapprehension. The Congress is not addressing the armed forces but the common people. So far as the armed forces are concerned, they are to carry on the War as best as they can. There will be no hindrance placed in their way, no embarrassment of any kind. Even if we wanted to, we could not help them in any other way, except by recruiting and similar propaganda, so long as the whole conception of the war was not made a popular one. Having failed in achieving this change, which could only come through a popular National Government, we cannot offer any effective direct help to the armed forces. Possibly an attempt to do so would produce conflict with the governmental apparatus, as the people are not at all trusted by it. So the army, air force, etc., continue their armed resistance in their own way. Production also is not interfered with; in fact it is encouraged.

Then we address the people, who are totally unarmed and unused to arms. We cannot arm them if we wanted to and every attempt to do so would mean conflict with the government. Even guerilla activity is out of the question for them unless they have arms, have been trained, and are organized by a National Government. No people anywhere could do much in these circumstances, except possibly sporadic outbursts.

It is here that nonviolent resistance comes in, for the Indian people have been practising this with considerable success for over twenty years.

4. Rajagopalachari had stated in his press conference on 4 May 1942 that the Congress plan of nonviolent noncooperation against the Japanese in the occupied areas or elsewhere, under all conditions, would be futile. He pleaded for the formation of a National Government and a National Army in collaboration with the British.

It is true that such resistance can hardly make any difference to an invading army in the course of its march. But even there it would create a psychological feeling of resistance. In other areas, outside the line of march, it would help in refusal of supplies and other help and in embarrassing in numerous ways. Should even a small number of prominent Indians be shot down by the invader for their noncooperation and refusal to submit, this would enormously strengthen the desire to resist at all costs and not to submit.

Thus to imagine that our appeal to the Indian people to offer non-violent resistance is almost an invitation to the Japanese to come to India is absurd. The only alternative in present circumstances, was to remain passive and submit, and on no account could we agree to this.

It is well known that Gandhi stands for nonviolence in all circumstances. But repeatedly the National Congress has declared that it cannot accept this or commit itself to it in case of danger from external invasion or internal disorder. Whenever this matter has been discussed with British representatives, and recently with Stafford Cripps, it was taken for granted that the National Congress would undertake and advise armed defence. But this could only be done by the state or by a merger between the state and the people. The people themselves cannot do so. We have therefore advised them, even so, to offer resistance but in the only way they can. This fits in also with past Congress policy and has the great advantage of carrying the whole national organization with it. To have a split on a theoretical issue without practical significance would have ended all possibility of popular resistance of any kind.

Every question has to be viewed today in its relation to the World War. The problem of India becomes highly important in this connection because events in India may well have a powerful influence on the War. Possibly no change now can make a vital military difference during the coming critical months. A psychological difference is, however, always possible and important. In any event, the War is likely to last some time and what happens in India will inevitably make itself increasingly felt—in India of course, but also in every Asiatic country as well as elsewhere. The fact that Indian freedom and independence are recognized by the United Nations, and giving effect to it in the present, to the largest extent possible consistently with the war situation, would send an electric shock throughout Asia. Even the countries occupied by the Japanese, like Burma, would feel it. Afghanistan, which may well be a danger point, Iran and Iraq would certainly be influenced by this in favour of the United Nations. These Muslim countries, it is well known, are at present friendly in a passive sense, to the Axis powers, whatever some of their officials might say. Indeed it is amazing how

terribly unpopular Britain is throughout Asia and it has come to this that to be associated with Britain is itself to court unpopularity and suspicion. There is no way to break this vicious circle except in India, and by brave and far-reaching action in India.

Ever since this World War began, there has been continuous, consistent, and very ably directed radio propaganda from Berlin, Rome, Tokyo, Bangkok, etc., directed to the Indian people in their languages. The whole history of British rule during the past 150 years is reviewed again and again and all its enormities exposed, and at the same time independence is promised to the Indian people. Intelligent people are not taken in by this but the average man or woman is inevitably influenced and he contrasts with it the British refusal to acknowledge Indian independence and their persistence in carrying completely authoritarian and autocratic rule. He is not so naive as to imagine that the Japanese will bring independence, but he is so angry with the British Government that he does feel that no possible change will worsen his condition. That may be a foolish attitude but British authorities have done everything by their policy and methods to encourage it. It is a dangerous attitude leading to passivity and has to be and is being combated. The call to resist the Japanese invader, even though nonviolently, is an attempt to produce a mental change leading to resistance. But it is no easy matter to bring this about with the government continuing to function as it does.

There is not very much active pro-Japanese sentiment in the country but the widespread anti-British sentiment often leads to pro-Japanese sympathies vis-a-vis Britain. Thus when thinking of China and Japan, sympathy will be with China. There will also be sympathy and admiration for Russia, which does not mean admiration for everything that has happened there. There is also usually a vague friendliness for America's democratic ideals, together with fear that America, with all her vast resources, may either dominate India herself, economically if not politically, or in cooperation with Britain. But when Britain and Japan are considered by themselves, large numbers of people view with satisfaction any reverse suffered by Britain.

This is a narrow and a foolish view but it is the inevitable consequence of past and recent happenings.

It can be challenged and changed, but the only effective way to do so is for Britain to cease to dominate India and for Indians to feel that they had achieved their freedom and had to defend it. Possibly also an actual invasion of India, with all its horrors, may produce a revulsion of feelings, though this may work either way.

People in India today feel frustrated and angry. Their own country is in danger of invasion and they cannot play an effective role. Foreign

armies march to and fro and fight each other and thus decide the fate of India, while they have almost to play the role of spectators. Hence a certain suspicion of these foreign armies, whoever they might be, and a resentment that they should come to India without any reference to the Indian people. A National Government might well have invited its allies to send war material, or armies, to assist it. But everything that is done through the British Government is suspect.

Even in regard to production and industrial growth, there has been in the past a great deal of suspicion of American motives,⁵ but this has been partly removed by authoritative statements made on the part of the American Delegation in India.⁶ Past memories pursue us: how India was treated after the last War. All the benefits derived by England through special agreements with the U.S.A., and by non-payment of her debts, were kept by her or by the Dominions. India did not share and she had to pay the uttermost farthing. Her currency policy was twisted to England's advantage; her gold and silver drained away. It would be well if the future was made quite clear, in so far as America is concerned, that India would be treated fairly in every arrangement. The Lease and Lend provisions⁷ might also be specifically explained, so that it might be known what burdens will fall on India in the future.⁸ Also India must not be made to suffer in any way by the intervention of the City of London in her dealings with the U.S.A.

5. The news about the American Technical Mission in India was received with caution by Indian industrialists. G.D. Birla told columnist Raymond Clapper on 2 April 1942, that the American mission had "Imperialist designs." G.L. Mehta, President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, talked of the need for independent economic development rather than relying on foreign aid.
6. Henry F. Grady, Chairman of the American Technical Mission, assured the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 8 May 1942, that the sole object of the mission was to see how best India could increase her war production, and that American capitalists had no intention of utilising the opportunity for establishing themselves in India.
7. The Lend-Lease Act of March 1941 provided for the lending, lease, transfer, or exchange of defence articles to countries whose security the President deemed necessary for the defence and security of the United States. This changed the nature of American neutrality in the Second World War.
8. In his statement on 11 May 1942, Henry F. Grady clarified that the operation of the Lend-Lease arrangement did not mean an arrangement for reducing the tariff barrier for American goods in the future, or establishment of free international trade. What the United States sought to do was to liberalise commercial policy after the War. He also argued that India should not follow, after the War, the system of protection, which would be detrimental to her growth.

There are two important questions which we have to face: the minorities question and that of Dominion Status *versus* independence.

The minorities question has become a bogey which is always brought out as an insuperable barrier to Indian freedom. So far as the Muslims are concerned, it is hardly a question of being in a minority for they number nearly 90 millions and are largely concentrated in certain areas where they are in a majority. It is inconceivable that such large numbers can be oppressed in any way. This question took its present shape when over 30 years ago the British Government started separate religious electorates deliberately to prevent the growth of sound nationalism and political and economic parties. These separate electorates have poisoned Indian politics. And now the British Government is encouraging the idea of separating India into two or more parts. From an economic point of view this idea is fantastic but it serves its purpose by diverting attention from Indian independence.

The nationalist position in regard to minorities is this:

1. India will be a federation.
2. Each province or such territorial unit of the federation should have a great deal of autonomy, subject only to certain essential all-India subjects which will be dealt with by the Federal authority. This is opposed to modern conceptions but we are prepared to give the fullest freedom to each unit so that it may not have any grievance and may develop according to its way of thinking, and only subject to certain larger policies.
3. Every conceivable protection and safeguard for a minority—religious, cultural, linguistic or any other—should be incorporated in the constitution and, where necessary, made into a fundamental law of the constitution.
4. When a constituent assembly drafts the constitution for India, questions relating to minority rights should not be decided by majority votes but by agreement; where such agreement is not obtained, the matter should be referred to impartial international arbitration. We would abide by this.
5. In effect, every protection should be given to the minorities, subject only to maintaining the unity of India and democracy.
6. While we are entirely opposed to the break-up of India and will try to prevent it, we recognise that in the last resort we cannot compel a territorial unit to remain in the Union against its declared and established will. This would, however, depend on geographical and other factors also.

There is no doubt whatsoever that it is possible to arrive at a full settlement with every minority, including the Muslims, on some such

terms, provided the British Government did not intervene and encourage separatism. If the British were not there, the agreement would come. One of our grievances against the Cripps proposals was that they went a step further in dividing up India and thus again came in the way of a mutual agreement.

About Dominion Status there is strong feeling in India and the very words irritate. The Empire has meant no good to us; it represents evil to us and we do not want to be in it in any shape. Our people are ill-treated and made to live as helots in many parts of it. So India has completely rebelled against any conception of Dominion Status. But we have always made it clear that this does not mean an isolated existence. We would like to be members of a larger federation and to cooperate fully with other nations, including England. That cooperation is only possible when we are perfectly free, not otherwise, for the old complexes will pursue us in any other capacity. Probably the British Commonwealth, as it exists today, will undergo a complete change after or even during this War. Anyway it will not help it or strengthen it, to have discontented India attached to it. Probably nothing has weakened England (and France) so much in this War as their colonial Empires. Instead of being sources of strength, they have become burdens, draining their energy. They have been living emblems of their imperialisms, making people all over the world doubt their professions, and giving the enemy powers every opportunity of doing propaganda against them. This very weapon could have been turned completely against the enemy by a declaration of freedom for these dependencies.

If this War had not come there is no doubt that a big upheaval against British rule would have taken place. There is also little doubt that if at the end of this War, conditions remain more or less the same in India (which they are not likely to do) there is bound to be a revolt on a big scale, peaceful or otherwise.

Nothing but a frank recognition of India's full freedom and independence can stop or reverse these processes. Such a recognition need not rule out Dominion Status but it should be for India to decide. Meanwhile, of course, the full application of that independence would be governed by war exigencies. Anyway the use of the words 'Dominion Status' evokes no response in the Indian mind; quite the reverse. This fact should be recognised.

In the above lengthy note an attempt is made to clarify the background in India. It is a complex background and various forces pull in different directions. No one can guarantee what the resultant pull will be, but it may be said with some assurance that certain results will follow if certain steps are taken. The National Congress is a democratic body,

and in spite of the dominating position of some of its leaders, it ultimately represents the bulk of opinion in India. This cannot be switched on and off at will by any individual, though it may be gradually directed in a particular way. Any person who ignores this will inevitably become ineffective. He cannot deliver the goods.

Owing to the menace of Japanese invasion, representatives of the Congress went a long way in order to come to terms with Stafford Cripps. That failure has put the clock back and it is very difficult now to get back to that position. Suspicion has grown. It is therefore not a question merely of a formula to cover defence or the form of a National Government. Such formula will be helpful but only if the reality of power is transferred and a background of freedom is created. Any attempts at compromise which fail will make matters worse.

It would probably be better not to make such an attempt to begin with, but rather to make a simple but far-reaching declaration that Britain (or the United Nations) recognize the right of India to independence and full self-determination, and leaving the working out of these in the present, so that a National Government might be formed, to mutual discussions among the parties concerned. Such a declaration need not go against any minority claims and certainly it would have to be translated, to the extent possible, into action with the all important question of the Defence of India and the War in the foreground. But those minority claims will have to be considered in the light of future independence.

To recognize India's right to independence is not in any way to rule out its joining a federation or even the British Commonwealth. It is not to place it in a superior position to that of the British Dominions, who are supposed to have that right, even though they may not exercise it. That recognition coming, *inter alia*, from the British Dominions themselves, would enhance the Dominions' prestige, not lower it.

The right being recognised, it cannot lead to a sudden and overnight change in the whole administration. Careful thought will have to be given to what should be done in the present, so as, on the one hand, to form a real National Government and give the people a sensation of freedom and a desire to defend it, and, on the other hand, not to upset any present arrangement and thus injuriously affect the conduct of the War. Indeed the objective must be to defend India to the uttermost and to direct all the national energy in this direction—towards the armed forces, both trained armies and citizen armies, and production and industrial growth.

Possibly the time is not ripe for such a declaration and for these changes, or, at any rate, people's minds are not ready for them. And

yet the sands of time run out. There can be little doubt that the ultimate solution of the Indian problem can only be on this basis, and on no other, subject to the consequences of this War. With such a declaration those elements in India which may be termed pro-Japanese will not count, nor those who wish to remain passive.

The next few weeks may witness major happenings in India which will produce their reactions on people's minds both in India, England and elsewhere. The situation may change. It may become easier to approach this problem then; or possibly more difficult. In any event there are very many people in India who are committed to oppose and resist the Japanese, whatever the consequences.

31. Distorted War Propaganda¹

Kulu
15.5.1942

Sir,

For some time past some friends, especially in Bombay, have been drawing my attention to the way official agencies have been using my name, and extracts from my speeches or statements, for war propaganda. I have not so far seen most of these efforts at publicity but I have heard enough to realise what they are like. I must say that I think this method of exploiting me for a cause with which I have completely dissociated myself is singularly unfair. Most people know, or should know, that both as a Congressman and in my personal capacity I am entirely opposed to any cooperation with the present government agencies in India in any war work. It was my earnest desire that at this moment of grave crisis for our country the burden of responsibility both for defence and the civil government of the country should be undertaken by Indian representatives of the people. That was the only way consistent with national honour and with an effective handling of the situation. Only a real people's government with national backing can function effectively in modern war. Certainly a foreign government cannot do so, and the British Government in India has demonstrated that it is totally incapable of shouldering that burden. Nevertheless, the British Government refused to part with this responsibility or to hand over power to Indian people and is carrying on in its own incompetent way.

1. Letter to editors of newspapers. *National Herald*, 20 May 1942.

In these circumstances we cannot possibly associate ourselves with the government activities. Having made this clear, I have appealed to my people to rely upon themselves and not to submit to any aggression, old or new. My words, torn from this context, have however been used to advertise and appeal for aid for the very war effort with which I had, in common with other Congressmen, dissociated myself. All of us, who dabble in public affairs, have frequently to suffer from distortion or mis-reporting. We have to put up with it. But this, surely, is a novel way of exploiting an individual.

If real publicity of my views is desired, I would suggest that the recent resolutions of the A.I.C.C. (some of which were banned)² should be broadcast. An even more pointed way of doing this is to repeat, whenever and wherever possible, my conviction that the root trouble in India is the British domination of our country. This must go, war or no war, and then a real beginning will be made towards the solution of our problems.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. See *ante*, pp. 268-271.

32. Evelyn Wrench's Report of His Talk with Jawaharlal¹

A conversation with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on any subject is a stimulating experience, for the Congress leader has an alert and incisive mind. There was a humorous twinkle in the Pandit's eye when I apologised for wearing an old Etonian tie, which I certainly would not have donned in the morning had I known I was to meet so distinguished a Harrovian that day. For the first few minutes the conversation hung fire a little, for Mr. Nehru at that moment had a good deal to distract his thoughts; but once we embarked on a consideration of the future world organisation, he became engrossed in the theme.

"The War", he said at once, "has put an end to the old style of questions we used to ask one another. When peace comes there will be an

1. Printed in *The Spectator* (London), 15 May 1942. Evelyn Wrench, (1882-1966); Chairman of *The Spectator* since 1925 and its Editor, 1925-32; American Relations Officer to Government of India, 1942-44; his works include *Uphill* (1934), *I Loved Germany* (1940), *Immortal Years* (1945), *Transatlantic London* (1949), *Geoffrey Dawson and Our Times* (1955).

entirely new situation, with a new set of problems. In the pre-war world the democracy practised by Great Britain, France and the United States of America produced a great measure of political freedom, but it came to a standstill in the process of its evolution. It failed to solve the problems of the security of the individual and was entirely baffled by the problem of unemployment; political democracy was not enough to solve these problems. The real question is how to have individual freedom and security. The solution is the extension of political democracy to economic democracy. Of late years it has been popular to say that it is only fascist countries that can take quick decisions, but slow decisions are not necessarily inherent in the democratic system. There is no doubt that the economic and social structure of countries like Great Britain is out of date. I most emphatically believe in the socialistic form of democracy."

Mr. Nehru foresees only one outcome of the War—he thinks some form of international cooperation on the basis of political and economic freedom, both of nations and of individuals, is inevitable. He did admit, however, that there might be, in the immediate post-war years, and especially during the armistice, a period in which the balance of power would be the main controlling factor. He agreed that the conception of the League of Nations was sound, but maintained that what was wrong was the manner in which it was carried out. Before an international body can become a real force, all the factors leading to war must be tackled, such as the private manufacture of armaments; there must be no more domination of one country by another and all nations must have access to raw materials.

I suggested that the English-speaking world provided the nucleus round which a real concert of powers must be built; the Pandit replied: "Big changes will assuredly take place in all countries; I can imagine no effective combination of powers which excludes Russia, India and China." He does not regard the British Commonwealth as a lasting institution. I referred to Smuts' statement² that the evolution of the British Commonwealth was the political miracle of the twentieth century, because it reconciled local independence and cooperation. Mr. Nehru does not subscribe to these sentiments, for he thinks that, apart from Great Britain, only nations with comparatively small populations have been linked together by it; not a single nation with a population of over 100,000,000

2. He had stated: "I look upon this Empire and Commonwealth as the best missionary enterprise that has been launched for a thousand years. This is a mission to mankind of goodwill, good government, and human cooperation, a mission of freedom and human helpfulness in the perils that beset our human lot."

has been a member; that would be a true test. He was quite definite. "I do not think", he repeated, "that the British Commonwealth will survive the War. The only important group of nations which will have a fundamental influence on world affairs will be a combination of Russia, China and India, controlling nearly two-thirds of mankind, possessing contiguous territories, and each with the same kind of stupendous agrarian problems. India's relations with China and Russia must, in the nature of things, be most intimate." I suggested that he was taking a good deal for granted, when one considers the disunity of India, in so readily assuming that it would be possible to mould into a workable federation the three nations with the largest populations, India, Russia, and China, with all their diverse elements. Presumably it is his ready optimism that waves aside the obstacles in the path of forging Indian unity. Mr. Nehru says most emphatically: "I think India is bound to become one unit."

I asked him whether he thought that Christianity had much of a future in India. He replied in the negative, and he somewhat surprised me by saying that he did not think it had ever played an important part in India, as it had been so largely identified with the British Raj, and the people of India had been obliged to make a financial contribution to the upkeep of the established Church. He said that the story of Christianity in China was another matter; there, undoubtedly, it had had a great influence, as the result of both American and British missionaries, not identified with a dominant foreign power.

He said that he did not think that organised religion had a large part to play politically in the future; religion would be an intimate matter for the individual soul, and will not be exploited for political purposes. Each country must be left to its own spiritual outlook, and its own conception of life. He said: "Religion will affect political and economic life less and less, it will only affect personal life."

He summed up his views in this sentence: "I do not think that Christianity will make much progress in Asia. Certainly in India it has played no part in the national awakening; the Anglican Church is regarded as part of the governmental machine."

Once again we returned to the problem of Indian unity, which is very much in Nehru's mind. Provided nothing is done to invalidate India's political and economic democracy, and India's unity, he would give every conceivable safeguard to minorities that the wit of man can devise. In the event of any section of India still persisting in desiring to remain outside the Indian union, he would be prepared to abide by the decision of any impartial outside arbitrator, such as the Hague Court. He refused to believe in a fundamental difference between Hindu and Muslim,

who, he claims, are 98 per cent of the same stock, and he even drew my attention to the fact that Mr. Jinnah's grandfather was a Hindu. I pointed out that in many countries, including Ireland, it was a spiritual view, not racial stock, that divided people but he made no comment.

I asked him if he thought Great Britain had any special part to play in the new India. He said: "All nations have a part to play." Turning to the past, I asked him if he thought that India owed much to Great Britain. He said that undoubtedly she owed much to British political thought in the nineteenth century, just as she also owed much to the French Revolution in the eighteenth century and the Russian Revolution in the twentieth century. Great Britain's chief contributions to India, in his view, were English literature and English thought. Finally, I asked him what was the future of the English language in India. He replied: "India is bound to retain English as her second language for two good reasons, because English has become the chief world language, and because so many Indians speak it already." It is, in fact, India's sole common medium.

33. Writers and the War¹

I send my greetings and good wishes to the Third Conference of the Indian Progressive Writers' Association. Seldom, if ever, was it more necessary for people to think correctly and understand world conditions as well as the different forces struggling for mastery, as it is today. Effective action cannot come out of a vacuum; it must grow out of clear thinking. Unless that clear thinking is there to govern our actions, all our energy and enthusiasm may well run waste. It is obvious that it must be the especial duty of the thinkers and writers of today to give a lead to others in regard to clear thinking.

Nothing surprises me so much as the lack of even an attempt to think clearly in the world today. Of course many individuals make this attempt and meet with some success but those in authority in most countries seem to be singularly unaware of the vast changes that are taking place and that are bound to take place. They talk vaguely in terms of a new order but they act as if all they desired was a slight reorientation

1. Kulu, 16 May 1942. *The Hindu*, 22 May 1942. This message was sent to the Third Conference of the Indian Progressive Writers' Association held in New Delhi on 19-20 May 1942.

of the old order which has been found wanting and which is dying before our eyes.

We are told that the first thing to be done is to win the War; all else will follow it. True, the progressive forces of the world must triumph in the War. But there is no greater folly than to think of this War as a purely military spectacle, although the military aspect is necessarily important.

Fascism is bad; no argument is needed to prove that it is the enemy of human freedom and progress. Imperialism is bad, as all of us know, not merely in theory but in practice. We want to be rid of both. Yet I feel that we are far too apt to forget that the mighty phenomena that we are seeing today all over the world are too big to be confined in a few words and phrases. We are apt to miss their significance if we make our minds prisoners of these phrases or slogans, correct as they might be in their limited spheres. Elemental things are happening and human earthquakes are taking place bringing an old world to ruin. Vast destruction is a painful thing to contemplate, and yet out of its womb the building up of something worthwhile might well take place. It should be the function of writers to endeavour to view this picture as a whole, not to lose themselves in the passions and prejudices of the moment, to see the objective shining clearly in front of them, and to try to harness action for the achievement of this goal.

This War has demonstrated afresh that in every country nationalism is still the most powerful urge. This fact can never be forgotten and it can only be ignored at our peril. But to those who think clearly, nationalism by itself is a narrow creed and leads to no solution. It must be tagged on to internationalism and to a correct appreciation of world happenings. But that internationalism will fail of its purpose unless it is rooted deeply in that irrepressible urge of the people in every country, that is called nationalism. In a subject country like India this importance of nationalism and the hunger for freedom is even more important. It is for writers to balance these two urges, that of nationalism and that of internationalism, and thus to evolve a resultant force which derives strength from the nationalist sentiments of the people and is in harmony with the international objectives of today.

India stands today on the edge of a sharp sword; on the one side is an imperialism which she detests and which she will on no account tolerate, on the other side is an advancing fascism full of peril to her and to the world. It is a difficult position, but it is clear that she cannot and must not submit in thought or action to this fascist invasion. Ultimately she must rely on her own strength, for there is no hope for those who rely on others.

34. To Yashwant Rao Holkar¹

Kulu
May 19, 1942

Dear Sir,²

Thank you for your letter of the 12th May.³ I appreciate what you have written to me and I need not tell you that I have given the most careful and anxious thought to these matters. They affect me intensely for all my life has been bound up with these questions and I cannot separate myself from them even though I wanted to do so.

The proposal that I should accompany Colonel Johnson to the U.S.A. drops automatically as, I understand, he has already left for America. So the radio stated this morning. I was expecting a telegram from him to inform me when he was going but no such intimation came.

I do not think it is quite correct to say that Colonel Johnson definitely invited me to accompany him. At one time during our Delhi conversations, when Cripps was here, he mentioned casually that he would like me to go to Washington and see President Roosevelt and that he could arrange a fast plane to carry me in four or five days. But he added that he himself did not think it would be easy for me to go just then. When I saw him again, on my way to Kulu, he said again that, much as he would like me to go to America some time or other, he felt that I should not leave India at this stage of continuing crisis. It was obvious that, quite apart from my feelings in the matter, he was of opinion that a visit for me now would serve little purpose.

I am myself quite clear that my leaving India now would be harmful to our cause in India and would yield little result elsewhere. Colonel Johnson at least understands the situation here in so far as I can make him understand it. I can do no better. It is desirable that he should place it before Roosevelt rather than I.

But the real problem has to be faced in India during the next three months especially. I know the situation here well and I am one of the very few persons who can influence it to some extent provided I remain here. My absence at the critical juncture would remove that influence

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Yashwant Rao Holkar (1908-1961); Ruler of Indore.

3. In his letter Holkar wrote that India's cause could be best served by its case being put directly before countries such as the United States and the Soviet Union. He proposed that Jawaharlal should visit the United States to put India's case in its proper perspective before the American Government and people.

almost completely and events would occur which cannot subsequently be ignored or reversed. Most of us are apt to attach too much importance to certain groups at the top. They count of course but the real thing that dominates the situation is the mass opinion of the middle elements. It is this that finally governs policy—apart from circumstances. This opinion is fiercely anti-British today, and I do not blame it at all for it. Indeed I am largely in agreement with it, with this difference that I can view the longer international picture also. Any attempt to ignore this opinion or go counter to it will lead inevitably to its becoming increasingly pro-Japanese. That must be countered for that would be a very harmful and unfortunate development.

Every policy, therefore, must bear in mind that an attempt to cooperate with the British Government, under present circumstances, will not only fail but will also bring a reaction to the other extreme. The only right policy for us is to maintain our general international policy which is anti-Axis and friendly to the other group, and at the same time to develop the sentiment of resistance to any aggressor, Japanese or other. Also to maintain our noncooperative attitude to the British Government so long as a complete change does not take place in India. This is difficult but then every problem is difficult today.

The crisis is upon us and it is really very difficult anyhow to do anything new on a big scale during the next few weeks or months. The kind of defence that is being offered today is enough and nobody, including the British, has any faith in it. And yet there is no immediate alternative to it left. For us to merge ourselves with the British effort is not to help it but to make ourselves totally ineffective for any future step. Also this gives a certain moral prestige to a rotten and tottering machine and possibly lengthens its life slightly. I am convinced that the British Government, especially in India, is wholly incompetent and can only meet with disaster. The turn of the tide will come only when this government is radically changed; in effect when it hands over power—almost, one is inclined to believe that the Gods have determined to destroy this British structure for all its sins.

To separate our sentiments vis-a-vis the British from those for Russia, China and the U.S.A. is a problem. It has to be done. Generally speaking the U.S.A. is looked upon with some suspicion as being too closely allied to Britain and interested in maintaining their Empire. Still there is some understanding of the democratic forces in the U.S.A. and this can be encouraged. It is easier to emphasize the role of Russia and China.

You will find, I think, some big developments taking place in India in the near future. I cannot indicate these at present as they have not taken shape so far. But it is obvious that we cannot remain passive

spectators. It is also undesirable for India to appear as a suppliant even before the U.S.A. Our only hope is to develop a feeling of self-reliance in the people and to make others realise also that we cannot be made pawns by them.

It is not a question of Congress die-hards coming in the way of a settlement. It is the British Government that are the die-hards; but die it will have to, if Britain is to come out of the morass of her own making. As for our die-hards, I think it is time all of us were die-hards and people everywhere realised this. That will make them think of India more in terms of respect and reality. Over vital questions there are differences of opinion and some times splits. But it would be excessively unfortunate if the Congress splits up now for it is the only organization which can hold India more or less together in the difficult days ahead.

We are going to have a hard time, a very hard time. But I feel sure in my bones that we shall survive and prosper in the end. So I do not despair.

We are going down from Naggar tomorrow after a week's delightful stay with the Roerichs who are perfect hosts. I shall reach Allahabad within a week, after brief halts at Lahore and Delhi.

With all good wishes,

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

35. The Dangerous Idea of Pakistan¹

I regret that the lesson which we had learnt during the last twenty years of discussing matters among ourselves and then arriving at certain decisions to be implemented by all concerned, and acting together as one man, is being forgotten even by the topmost Congressmen. I have no quarrel with those who want to stand for certain principles but it is as well a good principle to express one's opinion on a matter, participate in discussions with others and after a decision is taken to stand by it and act unitedly. One reason why the Congress in the Punjab is weak is that

1. Speech at a public meeting at Lahore, 21 May 1942. From *The Tribune*, 22 May 1942.

even though the province had some of the bravest men, their fault was that they never learnt to act unitedly even after decisions had been taken.

Very recently another event has happened in the Congress. Mr. Rajagopalachari has drifted away from the Congress.² From what he has been saying in his public utterances recently, I cannot say whether Rajaji would even remain in the Congress.³

Rajaji possesses a very keen intellect but that intellect is of no use when he wants to cripple the weapon which the country has forged to achieve India's freedom as a result of twenty-two years of hard work and innumerable sacrifices.⁴

It pains me to enter into a controversy with an erstwhile colleague but I am doing so because it pains me even more to see Rajagopalachari pursuing the path which he is now treading. That path is not only wrong but positively dangerous to the country and by following that path Rajaji is making the achievement of that object difficult for which he himself is working. In fact, Rajaji has acted in this manner in his anxiety to form a national government in Madras. Now a national government in a province, especially in the province of Madras, cannot be formed without first admitting before the Governor and the Governor-General that it was a folly to have come out of office. In these days of war, however, any government in any province, and particularly in Madras, will not be able to do anything beyond perhaps getting some drinking water served to the thirsty or giving to the hungry a loaf of bread to eat. During these days in any danger zone not the national government but the military shall rule.

Rajaji has acted most irresponsibly by getting a resolution passed by a provincial legislature party at a time when only a few days after a meeting of the Working Committee was to be held, and he has thus been responsible for dividing the Congress into two camps. My only satisfaction is that Rajaji has not succeeded, and no section of the Congress is with him. Rajaji has chosen a very wrong time for his move and

2. Rajagopalachari, on 4 May 1942, stated that the Congress Working Committee's new resolution did not meet the new requirements of the time. On 15 May 1942, he pleaded for a Congress-Muslim League settlement and reiterated that the Muslims' right of self-determination must be conceded just as members of a joint family concede the right of division to every member. He further elaborated on this issue on 18-19 May 1942.

3. Rajagopalachari had resigned from the Congress Working Committee on 30 April 1942.

4. Rajagopalachari replied to this charge on 23 May 1942: "This is quite true, but is it not all the more a tragedy that, in this supreme crisis, the Congress must watch things like a spectator?"

his action has added to the difficulties which are not a few already. There are a few persons who are now issuing statements in support of Mr. Rajagopalachari. It is surprising that being in the Congress they are trying to explain their position individually as if they cannot remain without opening their hearts. The statement issued by the President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee is a case in point.

I and those who are with me stand by the Delhi resolution of the Congress Working Committee.⁵ The very idea of dividing India is revolting to my conception of India. I have no hesitation in saying that those who talk of Pakistan these days are befooling the people. The picture of India which I had drawn in my mind received a rude shock at the very idea of the division of the country.⁶ Being a socialist, I think that in the present age no one can afford to live separately, and for the betterment of all, all the countries must act unitedly. Instead of accepting the plea for the division of India I have been looking forward to the day when we shall have a federation of Iran, Afghanistan, India and China. It has shocked me to see people asking for the division of India herself and so far as that is concerned, I will oppose it with all my strength. I want to make it clear that according to the Delhi resolution no one can be forced to remain in any form of government, though, again, it is a different matter by what method it is to be ascertained whether or not a particular section wants to remain with the whole. But surely the majority of say 51 per cent cannot decide the fate of the remaining 49 per cent in this particular matter. While we cannot agree to the division of India there is a clear difference between forcing one part or more to remain with the whole and agreeing to let that part or more move away. We cannot agree to any such division. But if events take an unexpected turn and circumstances arise over which we have no control we may be helpless and unable to prevent any part cutting away from the whole.

I find that young men here are raising slogans. Remember, that the days of raising slogans have passed away. At a time when two armies are fighting with each other, slogans will never serve any purpose. I, therefore, ask you to change this mentality. There is no need to scoff

5. See *ante*, pp. 188-191.

6. Replying to this charge Rajagopalachari stated on 23 May 1942 that if the majority of the people in a particular territorial unit wanted separation it "can never be withheld from them by a free India." He asserted that both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal had agreed to this principle earlier and added that his proposal "did not mean the surrender of our plea for unity. . . . The only thing involved in my proposal was the removal of the possibility of overruling the wishes of the people in any area against their expressed will."

at the "successful" retreats of the British forces from some places.⁷ It is not in good taste to ridicule others while you are not doing anything yourself and when the others are in any case fighting for their own Empire. No one can say how we will act if and when similar opportunity arises.

In the given present political situation, we can visualise great upheavals during the next six months and I want the people to be prepared to meet the situation as it might arise. Already, as you know, some of the Indian towns have been attacked by the enemy aircraft. If we do not learn to face the situation we may be perplexed when an emergency arises.

To get freedom from the British has become easier because British imperialism cannot survive the present War. British imperialism is vanishing before our eyes. But that does not mean that if we succeed against British imperialism we shall have nothing else to fear. We will have to fight other imperialisms and defend ourselves against aggression from any quarter. It pains me to see a handful of powers treating us as a commodity and deciding amongst themselves as to who should possess that commodity.

You should remember that *inqilab* is coming and we should be prepared to welcome it despite the fact that it is bound to upset the present order of things. I am amused at the talk of establishment of Pakistan these days for I think that events are taking place with such rapidity that no one can say whether those who raise the cry of Pakistan or those who are against it will survive. The next six months or a little more shall witness such upheavals that the face of the whole world will be changed. The war which is now being fought between Germany and Russia and the war that may be fought in India will have decisive results. In the eventful days to come, it would be only the Congress which would be able to lead the country, but might be that even the Congress might fail to render useful service to the people. I, therefore, ask you not to do anything that would in any way weaken the Congress. The Muslim League cannot do anything. The League has no constructive programme. The Muslim League, even though there are some brave men in that organisation, is out to pursue only a negative policy as opposed to that of the Congress.

7. Rajagopalachari commented on 23 May 1942, "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru warns the audience against slogans and foolish jubilation over the successes of the enemy, but of what avail are such negative appeals? How I wish he could discover some way actively to wrest power to organise the defence of the country, which alone can save us from indifference and prevent the freedom of India from being stabbed before it is born."

There are some who are in the habit of looking to Whitehall and weighing the words uttered by Mr. Amery or Mr. Churchill. Such people should remember that the question of India's freedom no longer rests with Mr. Amery or Mr. Churchill. It has gone out of their hands. It will be decided by the world events which are taking place. Amerys and Churchills can undoubtedly create difficulties. They can even raise imaginary barriers and disturb the peace, like a few men disturbing a big gathering, if it suits them.

During the Cripps-Congress negotiations, I accepted some impossible things but I and those who were with me, found out very soon that those in power in Britain still possessed the mind and mentality of the Victorian period and I came to a definite conclusion that it was impossible to arrive at any settlement with the British rulers. My sympathies are with the Allies, especially because of China, to which country I took a goodwill message, assuring it of India's full support in its struggle against Japanese aggression. So I am pained to take up the attitude of not helping Britain in this War—under the present circumstances especially when China is in difficulty. I want to help China, but my country and myself are not in a position to help it. All doors have been banged shut against India by the British die-hards and if any is left open it is a door through which no one with any self-respect would like to enter. The British Government wants from us recruits and money. But we do not know how to give that help. The government is getting recruits, and money is also being collected from our poor country. But one thing has been proved beyond doubt that the British method of dealing with India is worthless. Even in the matter of war, the policy and methods are those of the nineteenth century. If we had been given an opportunity we would have made India a citadel and prepared every man to be a soldier to defend his country against any aggressor. Those living in palatial buildings in New Delhi and enjoying their tea at 4.15 every evening and dinner at 8.15 every night can never create that enthusiasm among the people even if they are competent, which in fact they are not.

You should learn to keep up your courage and have brave hearts to face any situation. You should develop self-sufficiency and self-protection. Both these things, which form the keynote of the Congress constructive programme, are meant for the people of all communities. People should learn to act unitedly and stand by each other in time of any emergency and protect the life and property of their neighbours, irrespective of any distinctions.

Tired with the long and unending negotiations which we had in Delhi and worried with the events that have taken place in India, I ran to the

majestic Himalayas and there, as usual, gathered strength and inspiration from those snow-clad high and lovely peaks. I have come back refreshed and with greater vigour. I do not know whether or not world events would give me another opportunity to meet the brave Punjabis. But, in conclusion, I want to assure you that though not a religious person, a faith has grown in me that in the upheaval which is to come during the next few months India will become free.

36. Unsolved Indian Problems¹

Question: Why has the Congress not taken any action against Mr. Rajagopalachari, who, as you yourself put it, is treading a wrong and dangerous path?²

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is for the Congress President to say when and what action should be taken against Mr. Rajagopalachari. I, however, think that the Working Committee will wait and watch further developments.

Q: Do you think that a third party can bring about a settlement among the different religious communities in India?

JN: The Congress would be glad and willing to act as an umpire between the various communities for settling their differences. But such a settlement is an impossibility as long as one communal group looks up to the third party in India.

If the political objective of all the communities becomes the same, and all of them decide to make a joint effort to liberate India, keeping to themselves the right to press their demands after India becomes free, I am sure that a solution of the communal problem will be much easier than many people imagine. But if there is no unanimity on the political objective, and in spite of the loud claims made by them one communal group or the other looks upon the third party for achieving its objective, there is no way out. I am sure that it is quite likely that even in the process of achieving our independence some solution of the communal

1. Interview to the press, Lahore, 22 May 1942. From *The Tribune*, 23 May 1942.

2. See *ante*, pp. 321-323.

problem might be found, but if some people insist on certain conditions as a prerequisite for a settlement of the communal problem, it can only mean that they do not want independence, and that their claim for independence is nothing but a mere excuse because people will not hear them if they do not make such a claim. I have no objection to the League sticking to its demand and the Hindu Mahasabha to its own, but if they all agree to work together, first to liberate India, the solution of the communal problem will certainly become easier. In case, they insist on the acceptance of their demands first, it would only show that they believe that the British rule will remain forever and that they will grow under its protection. Every problem in the world has a solution, and I am convinced that the communal problem of India is also worthy of solution. Maybe, the solution would be found as a result of working together or as a result of a fight between the communities, or, as it happens sometimes, out of the fear of a conflict. But all this is possible when the expectation connected with the third party is given up.

As long as the third party remains, a settlement will be impossible. On several occasions we thought that we were within reach of a settlement, but the third party stepped in and something happened and our whole plan was upset. I must remind you that world events will shape our problems also.

Q: Have you ever discussed the ways and means for a settlement of the communal problem with Jinnah or Savarkar?

JN: I have never put myself in contact with Mr. Savarkar, or any Sikh leader or a Muslim League leader for the purpose of evolving a formula for the settlement of the communal problem, but I have talked with various League, Hindu Sabha and Sikh leaders about the problem informally. I found the leaders powerless. So far as the Congress is concerned, it made many attempts. Only recently the Congress President made an offer to have the communal question discussed between representatives of the Congress and the League.³ That offer still stands. No formal invitation has been extended to the League to enter into any negotiations because I feel that in such negotiations considerations of prestige play a prominent part and no real work is done.

3. Maulana Azad, speaking against Rajagopalachari's resolution on 'Pakistan' at the A.I.C.C. on 2 May 1942, stated that he was in favour of unity between the Congress and the League. He said, "I am prepared to call the Working Committee and ask them to nominate five representatives to meet the representatives of the Muslim League in order to come to a settlement. The attempt would be worth making even if it does not succeed."

Q: Why not give Rajagopalachari's formula a chance?

JN: I am not prepared even to give a trial to the solution suggested by Mr. Rajagopalachari. I think that it is no solution and it is bound to create more difficulties.

I am personally in favour of giving autonomy to the provinces, as has been done in Russia. I want that there should be autonomous cultural units so that they can develop independently. But at the same time the Centre must remain strong. That is essential for all-India economic policies, for instance, for economic planning. In that case the rich and poor provinces both will pull together. In the absence of a strong Central Government many rich provinces shall flourish at the expense of the others. The economic welfare of all the provinces alike demands that the Centre should be a strong entity enjoying at the same time all residuary powers.

India is a very powerful country potentially, in spite of her poverty, and has a great future. The country is potentially powerful because of her vast resources and the capacity to develop industrially. Our populace can provide skilled workmen, and with our resources and capacity to develop, India can compete very favourably with America, Russia and China. Such a country, if divided, will be ruined and her potentiality will be of no avail. My stand has been that complete autonomous units should be created and in their relationship to the Centre no decisions should be imposed by a majority but only by common consent, failing which matters might be decided by an international board on India. India has been a country of cultural unity. We have never been isolationists. The doors of India were open to all, even before the Mussalmans came to India. Whoever came here created a new synthesis. Indian culture is an amalgam of various forces. It was for the first time when the British came to India that the formation of that cultural synthesis stopped because the roots of their culture were elsewhere. There are few countries in the world where the ideal of unity has been realised as it has been in India. Maybe there is a difference between a Madras and a Pathan, but to the outside world both of them are Indians and I want that the tie of relationship should be further strengthened.

Q: Do you still believe in the formation of guerilla bands?

JN: Guerilla bands can only supplement the work of armies. It is for the state to defend a country and guerilla bands can help the state. Now that the formation of a National Government in India is practically out of the question for the time being, the question of the formation

of guerilla bands does not arise. However, given proper training guerillas can do a lot in many ways to defend India.

Q: How will the Congress fight the aggressors nonviolently?

JN: The Congress has never accepted the position that, while dealing with external attacks or internal disorders, the Congress would act non-violently, though that policy is neither fantastic nor dishonest. The Congress ministries had to use force to put down internal disorder. But only a state can fight an aggressor from outside, people can only help. I, however, want that people should not sit idle. They should offer at least mental opposition to the Japanese.

Q: While Congress has always advocated a negative policy with regard to industrialisation, you have been advocating the cause of heavy industry. In doing so, how do you reconcile both positions, especially being a leader of the Congress?

JN: I refuse to accept the contention that the Congress has followed a negative policy regarding industrialisation. It is true that the official policy of the Congress has been to encourage cottage industry, but I maintain that the policy of boycott of foreign goods has actually resulted in popularising the Indian mill cloth, as Lancashire goods have been completely stopped. Even Gandhiji has recently suggested the use of electricity. Gandhiji does not want to help those big industries which come into conflict with cottage industries. You are also aware of the work done by the National Planning Committee.

The Planning Committee had planned out certain big industries but I regret to say that the government opposed the plans and we are not able to foster any big industry. Impediments were put in the way of establishing motor industry, shipping industry and it is well known what difficulties Mr. Walchand Hirachand had to face after he had undertaken an obligation, involving crores of rupees, for building airships.

I am sure that the British Government is feeling sorry today for not allowing any big industry to grow in India. India today seems to have become the main centre of the war activity. Previously, the British were not prepared to give even a gun to an Indian. There is a difference between British and American approaches to the Indian problem and between British and American economy. America is not interested in creating vested interests in India. America's greatest concern is to win the War. America does not want to exploit India in any manner. At one stage Americans were willing to lend technicians to India at a

nominal charge to enable her to start big industries. While Britain wants India to remain an agricultural country, America wants her to grow industrially so that the purchasing power of India may increase.

Q: Why do you not visit the United States and counteract the wrong impression created there by the failure of the Cripps Mission?

JN: My visit to America would serve no useful purpose. I do not want to be away from my country at such a critical time.

I always feel and think that it is below the dignity of our country to do any propaganda in other countries. Wherever I have gone I have made it clear that India has resolved to settle her own problem. India does not want to ask for anyone's support. I never tried to excite the compassion of outsiders for India. I never begged for any support and that attitude has raised India in the estimation of the people of other countries.

In foreign countries my only object has been to place the question of India's freedom before them and tell them how greatly and closely it is related to the solution of their own problems and I have succeeded in doing so. Another test by which I judge matters is by their effect on the masses. I do not want to go to America lest my countrymen should begin to look towards America for all help even though I would welcome any help which America might give independently.

Q: In the present situation what are your views with regard to defence?

JN: Defence of India is the work of the state, and in independent countries, defence is the work of the state plus the people. At present we do not want to take any step in India which might result in creating a semi-martial law situation here, for that will be tantamount to an invitation to the Japanese to come to India. That is why I do not want to embarrass the government at present in any manner. The present War is a small part of a large revolution determined by tremendous factors. There is a unique spirit in Russia, but none in Britain, according to a correspondent. That is so because the Russians are fighting for a great and new ideal while the British are fighting for something which is dwindling away. London has been the biggest *bania* shop and Britain has built up big industries; financially they are *sahukars*. But now after the last War new powers have come up and it is difficult for Britain to keep intact its far-flung Empire. I have no doubt that India will be free, anyway, as a result of this War.

Q: What are your views about the policy of the Communists?

JN: The Communists have a knack of being carried away, pursuing a wrong policy and making their friends their opponents. I do not like the Communist way of doing propaganda either.

Q: Can anyone holding an office in the Congress attack its policy?

JN: I have no doubt that no one holding any elective office in the Congress can go about preaching against Congress policy.

Q: What are your views about the detenus?

JN: We all resent their unjustified detention, but we do not want to request the government to release them because we consider such requests below our own dignity and that of the detenus themselves.

37. Congress Foreign Policy¹

I am rather diffident in supporting the resolution.² It does not make clear where it is leading us to, and what it would actually require us to do when it comes to action. No resolution, howsoever accurately it might have been drafted, gives the complete picture of a mind. Many complexities, many implications, many difficulties in its actual operation could lie hidden behind the wording of a resolution. But Mr. Sharma's amendment is not comprehensible to me at all.³ Its author seems to me

1. Speech at the U.P.P.C.C. meeting, Lucknow, 31 May 1942. From *National Herald*, 1 June 1942.

2. The resolution moved by Purushottam Das Tandon welcomed the resolution of the A.I.C.C. passed at Allahabad (see *ante*, pp. 276-285). It also called upon the Congress Working Committee to give serious and early consideration to the question and methods of wresting power for the people of India from the unwilling hands of British imperialism.

3. Balkrishna Sharma's amendment demanded withdrawal of foreign armies and complete transfer of power so that the nation was able to contribute fully to world peace and freedom. In an event of British refusal, it called upon the people of the province to be ready to wrest power to establish an independent National Government. In an event of Japanese attack, it called upon the people to resist the invader through noncooperation.

to belong to the class of "resolvers", which is a nickname given to those who love high-sounding words for their own sake. His amendment is a sea of words and my own feeble mind cannot grapple with it.

Mr. Sharma's amendment either wants something more or something less to be done than what the A.I.C.C. resolution requires. If it seeks to do more, it is on the face of it absurd that only three weeks after the resolution of the A.I.C.C. Mr. Sharma should proceed to lay down a programme for the whole of India.

Mr. Sharma's criticism of the declaration of solidarity with the progressive forces, raises a fundamental question. It is for us to think if we would like to reverse the foreign policy of the Congress which has been followed during the last ten years. That policy had been laid down by the Congress itself at its annual sessions, and I doubt if even the A.I.C.C. is competent to reverse it. This, however, is a technical objection.

Mr. Sharma's amendment implies that the Congress policy has been framed at the expense of Indian freedom; because of our concern for other countries we have done harm to India.

This is an unfair inference to draw. We had declared our sympathy for Abyssinia and Palestine and Spain and China not out of mere sentimentalism but because of the realisation that such an attitude furthers the cause of Indian freedom. Mr. Sharma's complaint implicates me too, because I have been prominently associated with the formulation of the foreign policy of the Congress and have been India's unofficial ambassador abroad. But I can assert with confidence that that policy increased India's power and dignity, and is adding to them even now.

The question is asked why we should unnecessarily annoy Germany or Japan. For that matter why should we annoy Britain at all? In this way we can sit at home and make ourselves comfortable and dispense with the need of jail-going and other sufferings. But the Congress during the last ten years has made it its creed to annoy those who are cruel and who oppress other people. It has refused to think in that cowardly way of hesitating to annoy this power or that. It is our duty to support nations which have fallen victims to the very thing we have been fighting against. Had not Mr. Amery speaking in the British Parliament on Japanese aggression in Manchuria said that any condemnation of Japan implied an indictment of their entire policy towards India? Similarly our failure to express sympathy for the victims of aggression would damage the very cause we are fighting for.

Some people think that by isolating ourselves and becoming indifferent to the fates of other nations, India would be able to save her skin. But I warn you that thus isolated we would be like frogs in a well. Our

country would be dwarfed. Sympathy with the progressive forces would enhance our dignity. In Italy, while ambassadors of all nations had been fawning on me, I had refused to see Mussolini because I thought it would lower the dignity of the Congress. For the sake of that dignity again I had refused to see Nazi leaders in Germany.

I am astonished to hear that our foreign policy has adversely affected us. It seems that the hearts of its critics tremble with the fear that if Germany or Japan comes they would be beaten up. I have no such fear. I know that out of this War only four countries—China, Russia, America and India—are going to emerge most powerful. Why should I be afraid when I know that my country is going to be a greater country than Britain or Japan?

France's humiliating slavery and the way it was trembling at the feet of the conqueror filled me with shame. But its collapse convinced me that its own imperialism was the cause of its defeat.

I think the method of resistance and the capture of power suggested by Mr. Sharma is absurd and meaningless. We are asked not to come between the invader and Britain's military arrangements, and evaporate at the time our locality is turned into a battlefield, but reappear and establish civil administration which would then proceed to boycott the military administration of the locality set up by the invader. Does this mean that the coming of the invader would facilitate our occupation and setting up of a civil administration? This is an astounding suggestion, and I do not know whether Mr. Sharma thought of it in his waking moments or in his dreams.

The whole idea is fantastic and absurd and I am thoroughly sick of the way people get lost in the mire of words. It is also ridiculous to say that there are five lakhs of American soldiers in India. I would be surprised if even a tenth part of the number are in the country. The figure, however, is an instance of how in our panic-stricken state we form our opinions on the basis of rumours.

I warn the Committee that the remaining months of 1942 would be critical. Whatever may be the organisational strength of the Congress, its potential strength is very great, because all sections of the public are looking to it for a lead in the critical times ahead. It is for us to do our duty. The time for argument is past. We have to act now. Personally I am so sick of slavery that I am even prepared to take the risk of anarchy.

38. Prepare to Face the Challenge¹

I apologise for coming late to this meeting. I was busy in the U.P.P.C.C. meeting held at the Ganga Prasad Memorial Hall, where representatives from every district of the province had come, and we had many complicated problems before us for discussion.

We are living through difficult days. You all know that. But in spite of your knowing it I am not aware how many of you know about the India of today or the world of today. Perhaps in a few days, weeks, or a few months, we may be able to understand the world of today better than what we know today. Where do we stand? We in India seem to stand in the midst of a river where neither do our feet touch its bed nor can we rise above its level, and we are surrounded by crocodiles with their mouths open. As Mr. Sampurnanand has just told you we have been taught during all these 150 years to defend neither ourselves nor our country. What has been its result? We have become helpless. Countries build up their empires in order to increase their wealth. Britain obtained sufficient wealth from India. India became poor and the British very rich, but that system is now coming to an end. Empires today are no longer a source of strength but a burden and difficult to hold on. You see that not only the British but all those who had big empires are being crushed under the weight of their empires. Their power is declining and they are gradually becoming weaker and weaker. You have seen that a big empire of the world, the French Empire, which two years ago was the second biggest empire after the British Empire, became slave after a fight lasting two or three weeks only. The French became slaves, and that too with great humiliation. They are slaves even today.

Another empire was the Dutch Empire, i.e. of Holland. Holland also crashed. She was struck off the list of free countries. Thus two empires fell, and the other two empires—the German and the Japanese—rose to power instead.

Look at the British Empire. During the last few months wherever the British were attacked in Asia—in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaya or Burma—they could not protect themselves. These countries were

1. Speech at a public meeting in Lucknow, 31 May 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1942, File No. 4/1/42, National Archives of India; also from *The Hindustan Times*, 2 June 1942.

occupied by the Japanese.² This is a strange phenomenon and worthy of your consideration. Why did all these big colonial countries with whose colours the map of the world is marked, all over, remain weak or fail to protect themselves? There can be many reasons for this. But the real cause is that while imperial powers were forcibly governing their colonies, the people in the colonies rose to fight for their freedom and those powers resorted to suppression. In the second place, in order to protect an empire it is necessary to keep a strong army. Take the case of Britain. Its Empire extended all over the world. London became the metropolis of the world. Wealthy people of the world used to go to London. The biggest factories of the world were set up in London and in its vicinity. In this way the British used to draw wealth from all parts of the world and lived in great pomp. But it became difficult for them to protect their large Empire physically. In order to protect the Empire it was necessary to have control over the seas. In the present world, it is impossible for any one country to control the seas of the world in the same way as the British had done in the 19th century. Further, the development of aeroplanes as a force made it impossible for any country to govern the world. An empire formed on British lines cannot protect itself. Whatever may be the result of this War, Britain cannot retain her extensive Empire in its present form. And it is just impossible that there can be empires of a different type than the British one.

We cannot gain freedom because of the weakness of the British, but their weakness can prove helpful in our becoming free. The British who ruled the world with such a glory, have now been reduced to a second or third rate power in the world. You can see their status in Burma. The root cause of this is that they want to retain their Empire in the form of an Empire. Free India would have willingly desired to become a party to the present War and fought against their enemy. We might not have been able to do much but we have seen that even the unarmed people of China have been able to put up a strong fight. This has been possible because the Chinese people are behind the national cause. A shopkeeper thinks it his duty to protect his shop, a farmer his field. If this War had been our national war, every man in this country would have joined it. I told this to Cripps when he came to Delhi. I told him, when he was returning, that if a National Government had been formed, as a duty we would have to protect our country against any invasion. We cannot become a slave of another country, when we ourselves have been fighting for our freedom against the British. We would have used both the modern arms and the old methods to resist the invasion. It

2. Wavell announced on 28 May 1942: "The Burma campaign is over for the time being. But some day, I hope, we will fight it again the other way round."

would have been necessary for every one to work properly. It was our misfortune that this settlement could not be achieved. You are a witness to its consequences.

During the last few months you have seen British military operations outside India, in Burma and Malaya. We do not know what will happen in India. Let us not talk of the military action because the responsibility of defence falls on those who rule our country. These rulers belong to the I.C.S. class.

Similar I.C.S. officers were in Burma and we all know what they did there. The administration of the government collapsed so soon that we were very much surprised and began to wonder whether there ever existed such officers. Before the entry of the Japanese army in Rangoon, the local officers fled away. After this the police force was disbanded. Before they left the city, they released all the convicts. The government released even the most dangerous criminals and at the same time all the lunatics were also freed from the lunatic asylum. Those lunatics began to set fire to certain places and this caused a great panic in the city. But political prisoners were not released. Even Dr. Ba Maw, who was the first Burmese Prime Minister but interned under the D.I.R., was not released. He was released much later. This is how their mind works. What type of government was there in Rangoon and Burma which disappeared so quickly? It is the duty of a government to remain at its place till the end. In Malaya also such things happened as in Rangoon.

The second point is the way in which people were evacuated. The treatment meted out to the evacuees was quite partial. Every sort of convenience was provided for the evacuation of the Anglo-Burmese but no arrangement was made at all for any Indian, rich or poor. There are about thirty-three lakh refugees to narrate this story. All this shows first, the uselessness and utter rottenness of the government, and, secondly their utter foolishness. Granted that they had no sympathy for Indians but they could have atleast acted wisely. The Chinese who were there were also treated badly. Will this not arouse the anger of the people? If such things happened there, they can happen in India also, as there is no difference between the governments of Burma and India. The government officers here are also of the same type. They are very quick in taking certain actions. They threaten the press. You might have recently heard that the security money of the *National Herald* has been confiscated.³

3. On 26 May 1942, the U.P. Government forfeited two securities of Rs. 3,000 each deposited by the publisher and printer of the *National Herald* for printing certain leading articles on *War and the Congress*, and demanded two fresh securities of Rs. 6,000 each from them.

Today they are suppressing in different ways but they do not know the power of resistance which is building up. Seeing the conditions in Delhi even the American officials here remarked that the high officials of this place did not seem to know whether war was raging or not. Knowing means feeling, and acting accordingly. The fact is that they do feel it intensely, but their minds are entangled in knots from which they cannot unravel themselves. There is no way of unravelling these knots, unless India is declared free and armed with guns.

If India is armed with guns it will not do the British any harm. Today it is a war of aeroplanes and tanks. Fortresses of steel roll into action. You may or may not do them any harm with your guns but their bullets are quite effective against you. Under these circumstances, they should arm India. The world is undergoing a revolutionary change; still the minds of the English officers have not emerged from the 19th century. The conditions prevailing in Burma and Malaya show that the 19th century British mind cannot adjust itself to the needs of the 20th century. This is the cause of their downfall. The 19th century mind can neither fight a battle nor solve any problem of the 20th century.

At the U.P.C.C. meeting a resolution was discussed and ultimately passed.⁴ During the discussions I was thinking whether to accept the resolution or not. What have we to do at this hour, as time is marching on with such a speed that there is no room for resolutions? We should take whatever practical steps we can in this connection. This question always keeps revolving in my mind. I am constantly worried about this matter. But why should I trouble you with that problem? However, the resolution that was moved and passed was a short one.

The All India Congress Committee met recently at Allahabad. Have you read its resolutions or not? One of these resolutions was published in the papers in full, while two or three of them were not published in the papers under the orders of the government.⁵ The resolutions were passed by the Working Committee at Allahabad at 11 or 12 o'clock, and at 2 or 3 o'clock, a Gazette was published at Simla banning the publication of the resolutions. You will see that the government displays sufficient promptness in certain matters, because it understands all these matters well.

One of the resolutions banned by them referred to the conditions in Rangoon and Malaya and warned the people to be prepared, for such things might happen here too. We should therefore be prepared so as not to run away from our places if the British Government withdraws,

4. See *ante*, p. 330.

5. See *ante*, pp. 268-271.

and also if the events march fast we should be prepared to take over the government. This can be done only if we have sufficient strength, for the time for passing resolutions has passed. One who has power can march forward. As for power, it is measured today by the possession of huge and monstrous arms, which, of course we do not possess. But in the end even the real strength of guns and arms is determined by the display of the qualities of human courage, bravery and sacrifice. If any nation possesses these virtues, it can take up arms also if occasion arises for it. And only then, if certain brave acts are required to be performed, we can perform them with bravery. So, that was one resolution.

The second resolution was about the treatment meted out to the evacuees and refugees from Burma who have crossed over to India. In the resolutions that were passed in this connection at our Committee's meeting we emphasized one point, though we could have laid emphasis on many other points as well, that the time had come, and there was no escape from the situation, when it was not possible to solve any problem relating to India without her becoming independent. There can be no arrangements for the protection of the country unless India is independent. We have been demanding independence for a long time but we have now arrived at the conclusion that without it none of our problems can be solved, we cannot even defend ourselves. It may appear to be an ordinary matter but the fact is that to arrive at this conclusion is certainly a sufficiently important thing by itself.

The other matter is that the present-day British imperialism is suppressing us and this has been the greatest hindrance in the reshaping of the new world order. But at the same time British imperialism is an ally of Russia and China to whom we want to give aid. The fact, however, is that British imperialism has been proving harmful to everybody. Let alone India, it is proving harmful to other countries as well. Being an imperialism it has rendered India helpless and destitute as it has done with Burma and Malaya. If we look at it from another angle we will realise that it was essential that India should have gained freedom, so that she could have marched gloriously and done what she was entitled to do today. This was the point specially emphasized in our resolution. I want that all of you should try to realise its importance.

When I reached here some slogans of 'Long Live...and Down with ...' were being raised. Those who want to give vent to their sentiments may do so. But the truth is that slogans have no meaning today. You must realise that the revolution which is coming will end all these problems. We should make arrangements for our defence and do whatever we can for this and should follow the programme placed by the Congress before the country. This is not tall talk. When some bigger

and stronger countries have been enslaved today, how can we indulge in tall talk while holding meetings in our committees? At present, the Congress has chalked out a programme. Some say it is an old programme, and if not that, then, it is the same old programme in a new shape. But they do not realise that though its many points are old, the point which it emphasizes most is different. It tells us how to prepare ourselves for facing the War in its present form.

It is impossible for us to help the British Government while we are slaves. We have to do something concrete at this time. We cannot remain mere spectators. The programme which the Congress has placed before the country appears to be plain and simple. It calls upon the people to organise themselves and be determined to do their duty in the face of heavy odds. If you are organised, you rest assured that you can face the greatest possible dangers. You can face the British Government. When the British Government begins to withdraw, you should be able to carry on the administration of this district or province. Commodities cannot be imported from outside during the war period. In a few days you will not get cloth from Ahmedabad or Bombay, because you cannot transport goods by railways. You will get only what you can produce in your villages. If you cannot produce you will have to suffer in future. In case, food is not available, looting will take place. Outsiders will loot. No country becomes strong in this way. As this domestic affair has become urgent and as there is no other arrangement for gaining strength during this period of war, you should make adequate arrangements for food.

Further you have to enlist volunteers for the defence of your *mohallas* and houses. Residents of a *mohalla* should take the responsibility of their defence upon themselves and for this purpose organise a strong volunteer corps. I am not dealing with any political problem. It does not mean that we are going to take out a procession to demonstrate the influence of the Congress. I do not know what is being done in Lucknow in this respect. But I wish you to realise that these are not mere *tamashas*. If you are not vigilant at this time, we may have to bear its evil consequences. I think the next few months may see sweeping events in India and we have to prepare ourselves to face them. You have not much time at your disposal. Whatever time you have got you have to take advantage of it and get prepared. I do not like that you and I may run away to some other place. To which place will you go? You have to live in India. A long time has since passed. Either we stand alive together or lie down dead.

39. To J.J. Singh¹

Allahabad
June 4, 1942

Dear Mr. Singh,²

I am in receipt of your letter of April 10th. I received also the two cablegrams which you sent one of which was a joint one with Frances Gunther. These cablegrams and letters were delayed in transit, but they reached me in the end.

I must apologise to you for the delay in acknowledging those cables. I have been away from headquarters for long periods and completely engrossed in various activities.

First of all, I want to tell you that there is no chance of my leaving India or going to America in the near future. I should like to go to America for many reasons and I realise that America is likely to have a big say in the future. But I am quite certain that my work lies in India at present and it would be harmful to our cause if I left this country.

Thank you for sending me some newspaper cuttings. They are interesting. Raymond Clapper³ just passed through India and probably has not the faintest notion of what India was or is.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1897-1976); founder and first President of the Indian Chamber of Commerce of America 1938; President of the India League of America 1939-59.
3. (1892-1944); American correspondent with the United Press Association, 1916-33; political commentator since 1936; his works include *Racketeering in Washington*.

40. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
5.6.1942

Your cable.² Understand your anxiety. Owing to Cripps's attitude, subsequent repression, continuing arrests, forfeiture of *Herald* security

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his cable of 31 May, Krishna Menon had expressed deep concern over political developments in China.

and especially exceedingly bad differential treatment of Indian evacuees from Burma, there is an intensely bitter feeling all over the country against the British Government overriding other considerations. Impossible for Congress to go against almost unanimous public opinion. Factional attitudes now ineffective and harmful. Rajagopalachari's move injurious, producing strong reactions. Considerable sympathy for China and Russia but cannot override independence demand which is considered the only solution and effective way of helping China. Congress foreign policy of anti-fascist attitude and resistance against aggressor continues. Impossible to cooperate with the British Government under existing circumstances. Still no embarrassment to military efforts. Self-defence and self-sufficiency being organized independently. No attempt to create conflict but government's continuing repression may produce grave situation. Going Wardha for discussions.

Nehru

41. To B.C Roy¹

Wardha

June 13, 1942

My dear Bidhan,

Maulana has told me something about the medical missions sent to Assam and of the good work they have been doing. It seems to me that this work will have to be continued, possibly in a bigger scale, for some time to come. It is not short-range work or confined to the people coming from Burma. Therefore a wider foundation for it might be laid, both financially and otherwise. I am quite sure that large sums of money can be obtained for it if people really know all about it. Few things have irritated our people so much as the differential treatment given to Burma evacuees. For this work, therefore, money will be forthcoming.

I receive odd applications from young doctors or others who want to give their services for this work either free or for a small allowance. I do not know what to do with these. Sometimes I have asked them to address you directly. I think it would be a good thing if you could get some doctors, compounders, volunteers, etc. from other parts of the country also in order to give an all-India basis for this work. This would

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

also interest other parts of India and lead to further donations. I am sure we can get fine and earnest young men on very small allowances. Possibly they may have to face some danger later on and so this fact has also to be borne in mind and the right type of persons selected. If at any time you stood in need of volunteers, I could send you any number from the U.P. But it is obviously better for local volunteers to be used as far as possible.

May I suggest that you might keep a list of selected candidates for the medical mission so that you could call upon them as soon as necessity arose. A notice giving details of the types of persons wanted and other particulars might be sent to the newspapers of various provinces. People might be asked to apply to different provincial centres where they could be interviewed by someone appointed by you, or, if you like, some official of the local Medical Council. Thus you could have such centres in Bombay, Nagpur, Lucknow, Delhi and Lahore. Those who are provisionally selected could be placed on the approved list. They need not be sent for immediately but only when occasion arises.

I suggest also that except in special cases, where you think it necessary, the scale of allowances should not be high. If a high scale is laid down to begin with, you will have to keep up to it even when it is not considered necessary and feasible. I do not know what your present scale is. But I am merely suggesting this for your consideration, as I am sure you can get good people on moderate allowances.

I am enclosing an application in Hindi which came to me some time back. In case you cannot read this, I give the name and some particulars below. The applicant is Dr. G.I.D. Upadhyaya, Clinical Assistant, Bhowali Sanatorium, Distt. Naini Tal, U.P. He passed the L.S.M.F. (whatever that might be) from Agra in 1933 and has worked in various small hospitals.

I expect to be back in Allahabad within a week.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

42. India and the War¹

It is after four months that I have come to Bombay again. Many important events have taken place in India and abroad during this

1. Speech at a public meeting, Bombay, 18 June 1942. From Maharashtra Government Records, File No. 3590/H/VI-5; also from *The Hindu*, 20 June 1942.

period. The leaders in India remained puzzled in the past few months as the war reached the borders of India, after the fall of Malaya, Singapore and Burma. A guest from China visited India and was warmly received by our people. We had discussions with him with regard to the existing situation in China, India and the world in order to establish close relations between both the countries in future. Then Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India, and we have been still discussing his visit even two months after he left. With the Japanese occupation of Burma, Malaya and Singapore, Indian residents arrived in India as evacuees and they had to suffer many hardships including the discriminatory racial treatment of the officials. The Congress and other organisations made arrangements to provide facilities to the Indian evacuees but the government ignored them. This attitude pained the Indians.

The object of my visit to Bombay is to meet my co-workers in Bombay and particularly to inspect the work of the People's Volunteers Brigade, with which I am acquainted only through the papers. We should prepare ourselves for the defence of our country. We would have joined hands with other countries in this War but we will never seek charity from them. The Congress President Maulana Azad and myself recently had a talk with Mahatma Gandhi at Wardha about the present conditions existing in our country.² The Working Committee will meet after a fortnight to decide on the next step. It is quite improper to say anything as to what the Working Committee would decide. Whatever might be the decision of the Working Committee, it is up to the people of India to carry out that policy. India is caught between two mighty storms. On the one side, there is the danger of war, and on the other, the British domination.

It is easy to shout slogans, but difficult to do real work. Slogans are no reply to the problems confronting the country. It is time for us to think about the next step and to act accordingly. As far as the British are concerned, we have decided to drive them out. That is what any other slave nation would always do against foreign domination. If anybody hesitates in doing so it means that he accepts slavery. We have been struggling against British imperialism for the last so many years, but the situation has changed due to the outbreak of the War. The Congress had always showed its antipathy towards the imperialisms of Germany and Japan. We declared our policy against imperialism, fascism and Nazism. The Congress after the outbreak of the War stood for co-operation with the British Government, as a free nation, in the prosecution of the War. But the government chose to insult us instead. The

2. They met from 8 June to 12 June 1942. See *post*, p. 359.

Congress therefore started the satyagraha campaign but in a way so as not to embarrass the government. The British Government at that critical juncture tried to weaken our strength and the movement by encouraging our internal differences.

Some gentlemen here are saying that this is a 'people's war.' Those who are shouting slogans have only crammed these words and they do not know their real meaning. I would like to ask them in this *maidan* whether they are prepared to fight a people's war. It is useless to shout such slogans as crores of Indians have already declared that they will not cooperate in the present War. I ask them how is it a people's war? They should not think that they can change the character of this War by merely shouting. It is no use wishing as that wish would not change into a fact.

We do not wish to take a step which may help the enemy. People will not tolerate destruction of China and India under Japanese control. If I get an opportunity to resist the Japanese aggression, I will resist it even with swords and guns. I beg pardon of my elders for giving such a frank opinion. Swords and guns can be used only by the state and by the people of free countries. Slave nations can simply shout slogans and make noise, that is why we have failed to accomplish our duty to defend. The British Government knows the weakness of Indians and has therefore adopted foolish methods. We Indians will not hinder Britain's attempt to defend India, but the recent experiences of the British Government in Malaya and Singapore have exposed the weak framework of the mighty Empire and the reasons of its slow downfall. Not only are their brains showing weakness but also the failure of their policy in India and other countries has become quite obvious. I never saw such acts of foolishness committed by the British as during the last few years. In my experience of twenty-five years in the political field, I never came across such a great anger on the part of the Indian masses towards the British as is seen nowadays. The present circumstances and the repressive policy of the British are the root causes for such a grim state of affairs. The majority of the British spokesmen whenever they speak on the Indian problem use abusive language to cause harm to the dignity of the Congress. Whenever any government and its representatives feel that they are losing power they adopt such methods as are being used by the British. Indians cannot be mere spectators to this War and allow Japan to come and rule over India in place of Indians themselves enjoying their freedom. When a great revolution is taking place all over the world and the world is changing, the people of India will also see before their own eyes a great revolution in their own country within a few months or a year.

Today, the war between Russia and Germany is going on. Lakhs of people are dying. India cannot be an exception to the sufferings of the horrors of the War. There can even be bloodshed throughout the country. Though I am against bloodshed, still I would like to see such horrible scenes in the country as may arouse the inner feelings of the masses.

My feelings towards Russia and China are well known. I believe these two nations will play a great part in shaping the future world order. If unfortunately these nations are defeated, it would be disastrous for the entire world. The recent pacts between Russia and Britain, and Russia and America³ have been for their own interests, but I would not like to object to those pacts in any way. Also, I would not like to see the defeat of Russia. The position of India is not considered whenever such negotiations are carried on or any treaties made. This is simply ignoring the Indian nation and I cannot tolerate such a thing.

The presence of American military personnel in India explains to some extent the importance of India in this War. Today, India occupies strategically a vital place and if India falls, China will also fall, and Russian resistance may also be adversely affected. It would be an intolerable situation if Japan wins and dominates Asia. Therefore, while it is our duty to make India free we should not do anything to hinder the prosecution of the War.

I condemn the action of the government in the United Provinces of arresting some Congress leaders and thereby putting a hindrance to civil defence work.⁴ People of that province cannot tolerate such an action. They will also not yield to the British Government.

I am pleased to see the work done by the Bombay Brigade. I think that the A.R.P. is not of much utility to the people. I wish to emphasize the need for unity for the defence of India. I am astonished to see some people trying to break the unity of the Indian people by demanding Pakistan and such other things. In spite of an unarmed India, the people of this land can defend their country more effectively by non-cooperation than the British Government can do with its weapons. It is impossible for the enemy to occupy such a vast tract of land against the will of the natives. We should not be discouraged by hardships but

3. On 11 June 1942, the Anglo-Soviet Treaty of Military Alliance and Post-War Collaboration, for the duration of the War, and for twenty years, in an event of Axis attack, was signed. A Master Lease-Lend Agreement was also signed between the United States and the Soviet Union for safeguarding peace and security after the War.

4. On 12 May 1942, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was arrested, and on 6 June 1942, S.K.D. Paliwal and Mahavir Tyagi were arrested under the Defence of India Rules.

should face the enemy keeping before us the bold example of China, and then only the flower of freedom will emerge out of that great sacrifice.

43. To John B. Grant¹

Allahabad
June 23, 1942

Dear Dr. Grant,²

On return to Allahabad yesterday I received your letter of the 9th June. During my visits to Lahore and Bombay recently, I had occasion to discuss this matter with people interested in Blood Banks in those cities. I have no doubt that it is desirable to have such Blood Banks, especially to provide for the emergencies that are likely to arise. I should like Indians to contribute their quota to these banks wherever it is possible to do so without any injury to themselves. I understand that full precautions are taken to avoid any such injury and blood is only extracted after medical examination of the persons concerned.

The difficulty in this, as in many other kinds of works, is certainly political. That is, anything connected with the British Government is looked upon with suspicion by our people. This suspicion is not surprising in view of our past experience. Nevertheless if this business of collecting blood for Blood Banks is carried on in cooperation with local Medical Councils and people are made to realise that it is for their own good, then I am sure much of this prejudice will disappear. I understand from your letter that you have already received the cooperation of many eminent Indians. I am sure that if the right approach is made to the public many more will donate their blood for this humanitarian object. It would be a pity if political or other considerations came in the way of this kind of work. I hope you will get the cooperation of Indian doctors and the various hospitals in Calcutta. If this is done any suspicion based on political grounds will largely disappear. For my part I would gladly give my own blood for this purpose and I know that

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. (1890-1962); specialist in preventive medicine and medical care; associated with the international health programmes of the Rockefeller Foundation; served in China, 1921-39; Director, All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Calcutta, 1939-45; later associated with health projects in South East Asia, Canada, Australia, South Africa and Puerto Rico.

this would do me no harm. I hope therefore that a sufficient number of people will come forward to donate their blood.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

44. Another Casualty¹

Truth, they say, is the first casualty in war. There are many other casualties, apart from the human beings who kill each other and die in their millions. Some casualties are unavoidable, others may be avoided, yet others are totally unnecessary.

I do not know in which category education will fall. In Spain, right in the midst of the civil war, I saw the Republic Government building new schools and pushing forward its educational programme with all speed. In China, also, after years of horrible war, I noticed an enthusiasm for education and every effort to further it.

Not so in India. Here education is apparently considered a luxury in war time by the military or civil authorities. Already many schools have been closed and probably many more will suffer the same fate. In the Central Provinces I found that the only teachers' training college and a number of normal schools had been closed. In my own city of Allahabad some of our biggest schools have had to close down and their buildings have been taken possession of by the military. The C.A.V. High School had seven hundred and fifty pupils. An order came for immediate evacuation. After much persuasion a day's reprieve was granted, possibly because the next was a Sunday. The Vidya Mandir High School consisting of four hundred students was served with a similar order. When it was pointed out that it was not possible to leave the building within a few hours, I am told that the furniture and belongings of the school were forcibly taken out and deposited in the open.

The Kayastha Pathshala School, the Majidia School and the Anglo-Bengali Intermediate College have also been taken over and occupied, presumably by the military.

1. Article printed in the *National Herald*, 5 July 1942.

I cannot judge of the urgent military necessity which led to these extraordinary happenings. But I cannot conceive of anything which can justify this indecent behaviour. If schools have to be evacuated let this be done properly and decently and full arrangements be made for their continuance elsewhere. Only a very stupid soldier acts in this way.

Another significant fact is that only Indian schools, and in Allahabad, only private schools have been evacuated in this way. There seems to be some law of fate that almost every activity of the present government in India should be wrong, unjust and partial.

It is rumoured that the Allahabad University is also going to get notice to quit and that it might have to move to Hardwar.

My mind goes back to China where bright-faced boys and girls continued their studies though Japanese bombs came down from the skies almost every day; where universities functioned in spite of every difficulty; where it was universally felt that whatever was sacrificed to war, education must be preserved and expanded. For, on education depended the growing generation, and on that growing generation depended the future of the country.

QUIT INDIA

1. J.L. Berry's Report of Interview with Jawaharlal¹

I informed Nehru that I was very much disturbed by a report received by me from what I considered an unimpeachable source to the effect that Gandhi was planning to launch mass civil disobedience in the near future.² I pointed out that my government would naturally be intensely interested in knowing his reaction to such a programme. He replied that he had been away at an isolated place and consequently out of touch with developments for several days. He accordingly found it very difficult to give me his reaction without first having an opportunity of "ascertaining Mr. Gandhi's present position". This was precisely the non-committal type of reply that I had anticipated and I proceeded to give him details of the form which Gandhi's programme would take, as reported to me, in order to give him another opportunity of stating his reaction. He was not to be drawn, however, and replied that while he had, of course, heard various rumours he had not before been supplied with such details. I explained my own views of the very serious consequences that might be expected of a mass civil disobedience programme and suggested that perhaps I was exaggerating the seriousness of such a movement. He answered in a flash that "No, the result of such a programme might be very serious indeed". He stated that he had proposed to go to Allahabad Sunday night but that on the basis of our interview he would now proceed to Wardha. He promised that, after learning Gandhi's position, he would, if at all possible, let me have a preliminary statement of his own position.

1. Held at New Delhi on 24 May 1942. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 664-665.

James Lampton Berry (b. 1908); Secretary to the Personal Representative of the U.S. President in India, 1942-44.

2. In his writings in May 1942, Mahatma Gandhi called upon the British to immediately withdraw from India. When asked on 17 May 1942 whether he had any mature plans for launching a big offensive, he replied that some ideas were floating in his brain, but he had to wait for the whole of India to join him. Berry was informed that Mahatma Gandhi was in touch with Patel, Rajendra Prasad and others, who were touring the provinces to ascertain the measure of support for mass civil disobedience.

2. To Louis Arthur Johnson¹

New Delhi
25/5/1942

On my return after ten days absence in the mountains, I find considerable deterioration in the situation and events seem to be marching towards internal crisis. The Government of India's attitude and policies as well as London pronouncements on India exceedingly irritating to Indians. Gandhi's recent writings² betray great bitterness and do something to put an end to the intolerable situation in which Indians are treated contemptuously as pawns. He feels unable to remain passive spectator and demands British withdrawal from India. In effect this means recognition of Indian independence. While Congress demand is same, it is uncertain what attitude Congress will take up in regard to any new action suggested by Gandhi. But Gandhi by himself can powerfully affect mass opinion and any step he may take will have far-reaching consequences, though it may be limited in scope and area to begin with. For him at this age, it is his final struggle for Indian freedom and he is bent on carrying it to the end. While declaring his desire to resist Japanese aggression in India, he emphasized that present government in India is not only a continuing insult to Indians but is also incapable of defending India effectively and every risk should be taken to end it. While there is widespread sympathy with this nationalist approach there is also among many an apprehension that this may have adverse reactions on international and war situations. No clear programme outlined so far or decisions taken, but Gandhi appears resolved to persevere. Congress executive will meet soon to consider situation. I am much perturbed at some of these developments and am proceeding immediately to Wardha to see Gandhi for personal talks to clarify situation.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. This note was sent to Berry who forwarded it to Johnson who at this time was in America. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers* 1942, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), p. 665. Also available in J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He wrote in the *Harijan* of 3 May 1942, that the time had come, during the War and not after it, for the British and Indians to be reconciled to complete separation from each other. He stated on 11 May 1942, "I ask you a bloodless end of an unnatural domination and for a new era, even though there may be protests and wailings from some of us." On 16 May 1942, he stated that he had no moral sympathy left for the British. On 17 May 1942, he told the press that the British should immediately withdraw from India, even if it led to anarchy, and that his teachings of nonviolence should not go in vain. He also called upon Indians to resist any attempted implementation of the scorched earth policy.

3. Independence the Only Basis¹

I am surprised to read vague reports about my proceeding to America in the near future.² I know nothing about this beyond what I previously stated. Much as I would like to go there, I feel that my job at present is in India and I would not like to leave it. We live in continually changing times and new problems arise which sometimes require new solutions. None can prophesy about the distant future. But the problem of India must essentially be solved in India; for in the world constituted as it is today no problem can be isolated from other problems and opinions. The opinions of other countries count in any larger reorientation of the world. All I can say is that for the present, as far as I can see, there is no question of my leaving India.

The policy of the British Government and recently the Cripps negotiations have shown the futility of discussing anything on any basis other than complete handing over of power to India's representatives. It is on the basis of the recognition of India's independence that any fruitful talks can take place. No other basis counts today. Those who agree with this basis in India or outside can easily come to terms. But if any group in India does not act on that basis and continually looks for favours from the British Government there is no common ground with it.

Accepting that basis of independence and non-intervention by any outside party, there should be no difficulty in solving both the communal problem and other problems. Even from the point of view of utilising India's resources to the best advantage for the defence of the country as well as for helping the common cause, a free India can do so in alliance with others much more effectively than a resentful subject India. But that means our being treated and our treating other countries as allies and not being treated in a subordinate capacity. In particular I would like India to do all it can to be of help to China in her present grave distress. But present circumstances are such that we cannot do much. We are helpless in the matter. A free India allied to China and other countries in that group could do infinitely more and the mere fact of Indian freedom would revolutionise the mental atmosphere of the world. This War is infinitely more than a military spectacle. Moral and psychological urges count in every war, much more so in this War which can only be

1. Interview to the press, Wardha, 28 May 1942. *The Hindu*, 29 May 1942.

2. On 25 May 1942, the National Broadcasting Corporation announced from New York, that Jawaharlal was proceeding to Washington as Franklin Roosevelt was anxious to discuss with him India's defence and war production.

conducted with success if it is based on the goodwill and enthusiasm of the masses in every country. If India is important in this War, as she undoubtedly is at present, the goodwill of her people is equally important. Hence the paramount necessity of Indian independence not merely for India's sake but for the sake of the larger good and freedom of the world.

4. To Abul Kalam Azad¹

Lucknow
May 30, 1942

My dear Maulana,

I arrived here last night. I ought to have reached in the morning but, as usual, the Grand Trunk Express was five hours late and I missed my connection at Jhansi, where I had to spend another eight or nine hours. Thus I missed an important day's sitting of our Provincial Council. Railway travelling is becoming increasingly difficult, especially when there is a change. Almost invariably one misses the connection. From Allahabad to Wardha is now a much more difficult journey than it was. There is only one partly suitable train and this lands one in Nagpur where one must stop for some hours.

Apart from other problems, I have to face the question of forfeiture of the security from the *National Herald*. We have filed another declaration today but no order has been passed upon it. This will probably be done on Monday. I am, therefore, staying on here till the night of Monday, June 1st, and shall reach Allahabad on June 2nd morning.

I shall then be away from Allahabad for nearly a month. I have much to do there and many matters to attend to, but I shall keep myself ready to go to Wardha whenever you want me to do so. I should, however, like to have at least two clear days in Allahabad and, if possible, three. I hope you will send me directions as to when I should reach Wardha. My journey there will be a longer one than yours.

I spent just one day with Gandhiji. I am glad I went because I got to know a little of what he was thinking. During my stay at Kulu I was almost cut off from newspapers and outside news. On coming back I was confronted by many new developments and I found myself rather at sea. The visit to Gandhiji and now the meeting of our Provincial

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Congress Committee, have helped me to understand the present situation. I told Gandhiji that I had come to listen to him and not to talk much, as I wanted to have time to think over what he said.

I understand here that the scheme for making provision for evacuee children from Calcutta has fallen through or at any rate has made no progress. So we are not taking any further steps in the matter.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
1.6.42

Sorry not answered your previous cables. Have been travelling about. Your presence in India welcome and would like you return if feasible. But difficult for me judge possibilities work in England now. Situation here complex but clear that no settlement possible except on the basis of independence.

Nehru

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

6. To J.L. Berry¹

Allahabad
3 June 1942

I have visited Mr. Gandhi and discussed the situation with him and have also had occasion to judge public feeling at an important meeting of the Congressmen of our province (the United Provinces) which is a large province in India. I propose to return to Gandhi soon for fuller conversations.

1. This message was sent to Berry who forwarded it to Johnson. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 668-669. Also available in J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Gandhi has no desire to precipitate matters or to embarrass the present war effort. He is also firm in his decision that Japanese aggression in India must be resisted. He warmly repudiated the suggestion that his recent writings encouraged the Japanese. But he was definite that recognition of India's independence is essential now from every point of view including that of defence and no problem can be solved except on that basis. Every attempt to postpone this worsens the situation and every possible risk involved in independence is preferable and safer than certain deterioration otherwise. Present defence is artificial and isolated from the people and British policy is antagonising every group including Indian officers and army. Only on the basis of independence can reality and firmness be introduced in defence and other matters, otherwise there is likelihood of cracking up as in Burma. Gandhi is prepared that India should treat this matter on equal basis as an ally of Britain and others but not as subordinate in any shape. No arrangement is possible on the basis of India's subordination or subjection.

Gandhi is also agitated both at the growing repressive policy of the government and continuing differential treatment of Indian evacuees from Burma and in India. Official policy is greatly resented all over the country and adding to the bitterness. My closest colleague² in my province, a well-known anti-fascist, was recently interned without trial and my request for jail interviews with him was rejected. Newspapers are being suppressed. Large population in rural areas was suddenly ordered to leave homes without adequate notice or compensation or provision for transport, housing or land. Gandhi feels that where patently unreasonable and unjust orders are passed they may have to be disobeyed by the people concerned.

In both these matters public opinion is strongly with Gandhi and Congress supports him. Rajagopalachari is likely to make no difference except to stiffen the Congress attitude which is one of extreme resentment against the British policy. Future developments are uncertain but continuing governmental repression may lead to relatively small local conflicts. Gandhi does not intend starting any big movement unless he is forced to do so by the British policy. He feels he cannot remain passive spectator of what is happening and any risks are preferable to submission to repression of the people and consequent spiritual degradation. While both Gandhi and Congress declared inability to associate themselves with British war effort in present circumstances, there is no intention of impending military operation in any way. But popular feeling against the

2. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai.

British Government and policy undoubtedly isolates that effort. Congress advice to the civil population, which is unarmed and untrained, is to noncooperate with the aggressor in every way and obstruct him. No other method of resistance is open to them. This does not refer to the military defence which will continue.

Gandhi is anxious to help China but says the British Government and policy stand in the way of effective help being given by the Indian people. With freedom India will do her utmost to help. Gandhi is also anxious that American opinion should not misunderstand him. He has emphasized Indian independence as this is the only way both for India and for the progressive nations to utilise India's great resources in the cause of world freedom. But he cannot submit to treatment of India as a chattel by others. This treatment demonstrates that Britain is determined to obstruct Indian and Asiatic freedom. The larger cause demands completely new outlook towards Asiatic nations and as evidence of this recognition of India's independence.

My greetings and good wishes to Colonel Johnson. I hope he is rapidly recovering from his illness.

Jawaharlal Nehru

7. To Abul Kalam Azad¹

Allahabad
June 5, 1942

My dear Maulana,

Ever since my return to Allahabad I have been anxiously waiting for news from you. I have sent you three telegrams but so far there has been no reply. I do hope you are well.

Ordinarily it would not have mattered much if I stayed here a few days more or not. I have plenty of work to do here. But I feel a little oppressed at the fact that big things are happening and we are passively looking on. I know that we cannot do much but even so this inactive condition is bound to injure the Congress. What we should do is another matter.

Inevitably this depends on full and frank talks with Gandhiji. He has taken up a certain attitude, with part of which I agree and part of which I do not. Or rather it would be more correct to say that I do not agree

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L

with his approach though generally speaking I agree with the actual work to be done. That of course is an old argument between us. But in the present circumstances it has ceased to be academic and is likely to affect all our work. Therefore it is essential, as you yourself suggested, to have these talks with Gandhiji and not allow matters to drift any further. My brief talk with him last week, short as it was, had I think some good effect.

When I came away from Wardha, it was understood that I should be back by about the 4th June. It was presumed then that you would be going there about that time or earlier. Accordingly I promised to return by that date and I made an engagement with an American friend² to meet me there. This American is already there waiting for me.

I feel that I should now go to Wardha as soon as possible in order not to upset arrangements any more. Even if I get there a day or two before you, I shall of course wait for you and remain there as long as you wish.

Last evening I sent you another express telegram. I am waiting for your reply. Unless I hear to the contrary from you, I should like to go to Wardha tomorrow morning reaching there on the 7th afternoon.

I am anxious about your health. I hope you have got over the feeling of giddiness that you sometimes had. Travelling in this weather is a trial but there is no help for it. Your journey to Wardha direct from Calcutta will at least be no-change one and more comfortable than mine is likely to be *via* Itarsi where I shall have to spend many hours.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Louis Fischer (1896-1970); American author and journalist; his works include *The Soviets in World Affairs*, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, *The Life and Death of Stalin*, *Men and Politics*, *A Week with Gandhi*, *The Great Challenge* and *Russia Revisited*.

8. The British Must Leave India¹

I am in entire agreement with Mahatma Gandhi and fully endorse his demand for the immediate and orderly withdrawal of the British Government from India. I am sadly disappointed at the performance of the

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 10 June 1942. From *The Hindu*, 11 June 1942.

British Government in India. I am sadly disappointed at the performance of the British Parliament and the repressive policy launched by the government of my home province.

Fascists and Axis partners are our enemies. But our fight against the British Government will continue till India is freed. But if, in the meantime, the Japanese aggressor invades India we will resist the invasion, too, but we cannot compromise, on any ground, our quarrel with the British Government who have been denying India freedom. Americans are our friends but we would not like an American army to land in India and overrun this country. So far as the prospects of a mass movement of Gandhiji's contemplation² are concerned, you can see the results within two months.

2. On 31 May 1942, Mahatma Gandhi stated: "I have waited and waited, until the country should develop the nonviolent strength necessary to throw off the foreign yoke. But my attitude now has undergone a change. I feel that I cannot afford to wait. If I continue to wait, I might have to wait till doomsday. For the preparation that I have prayed for and worked for may never come, and in the meantime I may be enveloped and overwhelmed by the flaws that threaten all of us. That is why I have decided that even at certain risks, which are obviously involved, I must ask the people to resist slavery." Explaining the form his impending civil disobedience movement would take, Mahatma Gandhi told Louis Fischer, in the first week of June 1942, that the peasants would stop paying taxes, and would make salt despite prohibition, and then the next step would be to seize the land.

9. Note on Conversations with Mahatma Gandhi¹

After conversations with Bapu from June 8th to 12th 1942, Bapu's views appear to be as follows:

1. The time has come for us to emphasize and concentrate on complete independence and the total withdrawal of the British power from India. This has become essential from every point of view and there is no solution of any of India's major problems (such as the communal problem) till such withdrawal. Even from the point of view of the War, the defence of India, help to China, or the advancement of the Allied cause, this is necessary. Not to do so is to allow the situation to deteriorate progressively and rapidly, and go downhill to disaster.
1. This confidential note was written by Jawaharlal at Wardha on 12-14 June 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. The demand for the withdrawal of British rule from India means in effect the acknowledgement of India's independence and then consultations on this basis between representatives of India and England for the transfer of power and for a mutual adjustment of relations between the two countries, especially in view of the War that is going on.
3. The demand does not mean the withdrawal of Britishers as such or even the British army, which in view of the War may be treated as an allied army engaged in the common defence of India. But it does mean full transfer of political power to Indian representatives, and a treaty or arrangement for the joint defence of India. This would apply equally to American forces in India which may be treated as an allied army also.
4. The demand for independence and transfer of political power must be acceded to independently of any arrangements being made in India for the governance of the country after the British withdrawal. It is hoped that satisfactory arrangements for the establishment of a National Government, agreeable to the major groups and parties, will be made. It is expected that, in any event, as soon as the independence of India is accepted and announced, an agreement between the major groups will become highly likely. But even if unfortunately this does not take place immediately, the British Government, on their part, must agree to Indian independence. Such risks of chaos and anarchy as may appear possible are preferable to the existing state of affairs.
5. Thus, in any event, and whatever the possible consequences, the British Government should recognise the independence of India and announce their intention to hand over political power.
6. From the points of view of the War, the defence of India and help to China, the present state of affairs is highly unsatisfactory and it is exceedingly doubtful if any effective action in this behalf can be taken by the British Government and its allies so long as India is treated as a subject country. The risks of maintaining the *status quo* are very great—much greater than those involved in any change. India is sullen and angry and is a deadweight round the Allies; her defence is impeded; and the help that might be sent to China is far less than a free India could and would give. The mere fact of Indian independence would make a vast difference all over the world and give a moral weight to the Allied cause. It would electrify not only the Indian people but people everywhere. But even apart from the moral benefit, the practical gain would be great. India could then defend herself better, give far more aid to China, and help the Allied cause more effectively.

7. The people of India should have, and have, every sympathy for China's freedom. China's subjection to Japanese imperialism would be a great tragedy in itself and would also add to the dangers of India. Therefore, it is desirable and necessary for India to help China to the best of her ability. At present India cannot do so. A free India will do so effectively and can make it impossible for Japanese imperialism to crush China.
8. We cannot on any account entertain the idea of doing anything to facilitate the Japanese invasion of India or Japanese aggression in China. Such invasion must be resisted by Indians. At present owing to British rule and the methods practised by it, there is intense and widespread resentment all over India and, as a consequence, a certain feeling of satisfaction at British defeats and Japanese victories. This is leading to a state of passive acceptance of a Japanese invasion when it comes. It saps the people's will and power to resist such an invasion when it comes. This is dangerous and harmful to India, develops a servile and submissive state of mind, and makes her an easy prey to an invader. To change this mentality and make it vital and resentful of any invasion or of submission, it is essential for Indians to have and secure independence, which they must defend.
9. The transfer of political power will involve an upsetting of the existing structure. This should however be done so as not to give any advantage to the Japanese or any other aggressor. Thus it should be agreed that the existing military dispositions of armed forces should continue and the British or American allies of India should be entitled to use India as a base for their operations for the defence of India, for help to China and for objectives connected with these.
10. The British and American forces will also be entitled to take advantage of the productive capacity of India.
11. The Indian National Government will treat the British and American forces as allies and will cooperate with them in the defence of India and help to China and connected purposes. Gandhiji in his personal capacity cannot countenance the use of armed forces by India as this is opposed to his principles, and he would like India (and the rest of the world) to adopt the methods of nonviolence. But he recognises that in existing circumstances an Indian national government is not going to take this view and will use armed forces for India's defence. He is prepared also to countenance, after the declaration of Indian independence, the presence of British and American forces in India as allies cooperating in a common endeavour.
12. In the event (which is not only likely but almost certain) of Britain not agreeing to Indian independence, the *status quo* cannot

be tolerated and something must be done to change it. That is some kind of a direct action movement should be started. But before this is done the public mind must be well prepared for it, and in initiating or carrying on that movement every care should be taken that it does not directly or indirectly aid the Japanese or any other invader of India. Apart from this, the movement should be envisaged as a mass movement and there should be as few restrictions as possible on the people who wish to join it. Nor should any untoward incidents lead to its suspension or withdrawal. The movement must aim at independence and be carried on till this is achieved.

13. As the situation changes from day to day, it is difficult to say definitely beforehand what should be done some weeks or months later. The actual decision for any major step must be based on the actual position then—national and international.

14. Quite apart from a major step, some kind of local resistance or opposition may become necessary in the case of sudden and improper evacuation orders or other orders which harass the people. Whenever this is necessary it should be done. It is possible that out of these minor conflicts, a major conflict might take shape.

1. Full independence must be recognised.
2. As soon as this is done representatives of India and England (and when necessary other United Nations) to meet to discuss actual conditions of transfer of power to National Government.
3. National Government associates itself as an ally of the United Nations and cooperates with them in the defence of India, help to China, etc.
4. British or American armed forces in India to be treated as allied forces.
5. India's industrial capacity to be increased in every way.

10. To James Lampton Berry¹

Wardha
June 14, 1942

Dear Mr. Berry,

Mahatma Gandhi has addressed a letter to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.² In this letter he explains his present policy in regard to India,

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. See the succeeding item.

China and Japanese aggression. In view of certain misapprehensions that have arisen, this letter, with the elucidation it contains, has a certain importance. Probably it will be sent by cable to Generalissimo Chiang.

As I feel that Colonel Louis Johnson would be interested in the contents of this letter, I am sending you a copy of it, so that you may communicate it to him. Mr. Gandhi intends publishing the letter in the next issue of his weekly journal, *Harijan*, which will come out on the 21st June.³

The letter gives expression to Mr. Gandhi's personal views but there is little doubt that he represents, in his basic approach, the vast majority of the country. Certain differences have arisen in the past between him and some members of the Congress as to the application of the principle and technique of nonviolence to external defence and civil disorder. In his letter Mr. Gandhi has recognised that the government of free India will, in the existing circumstances, necessarily have recourse to armed defence against aggression. He has further stated, even in his personal capacity, that he would agree to the presence of foreign armed forces belonging to the Allies in India, and the use of India by these forces as a base for military operations against the aggressor countries. But all this depends on India being free and independent and entering into treaty relations with the Allied nations. Indeed the crux of the matter is the independence of India.

The Congress has yet to consider Gandhi's proposals formally. But the latest decisions of the Congress are clear enough and approximate very closely to Mr. Gandhi's present position. In effect they amount to this: the immediate recognition of and giving effect to Indian independence and then an alliance with the Allied powers for the defence of India and for other common purposes. In other words, a free India will throw her full weight in resisting Japanese or other aggression, in helping China to the best of her ability, and in furthering the common cause. She would do her utmost to increase her production and her capacity for defence.

Mr. Gandhi has further stated that in whatever action he might be compelled to advise or undertake, the governing factor will be the consideration that it should not injure China or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China.

It has been my earnest desire that India should cooperate to the fullest extent with China and America. Asia, or any other large part of the world, dominated by fascism or Nazism is an intolerable thought to me,

3. On the request of Chiang Kai-shek the letter was not published in the *Harijan*.

and I should like India to do her utmost to combat this. But the blindness and obstinacy of the British Government have created a situation of extreme gravity in India and I do not see wisdom dawning upon them in the near future. It would appear that they are determined to bring about a conflict with the Congress and nationalist elements in India. Already many of my closest colleagues have been arrested and this process is continuing. It is possible that I might be arrested. It is possible also that Congress might be temporarily crushed by severe repression. But the Indian people are not going to be coerced, much less won over, by these methods, and the price to be paid by all concerned will be a heavy one. I have endeavoured with all my strength to avoid this conflict and this price. But the future appears to be dark.

I am going to Bombay tomorrow and I shall spend four days there. I expect to reach Allahabad on the 20th night.

Dr. K.B. Menon, who is taking this letter, has instructions to bring any reply which you may desire to send, to me to Bombay.

I think I have already told you that you can get into touch with me at any time through Mr. Raghunandan Saran, whom, I believe, you have met. His home address is 2 A, Metcalfe Road, Delhi, and his office address is C/o Pyare Lal & Sons, Motor Engineers, Connaught Circus, New Delhi.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to Chiang Kai-shek¹

Sevagram
June 14, 1942

Dear Generalissimo,

I can never forget the 5 hours' close contact I had with you and your noble wife in Calcutta. I had always felt drawn towards you in your fight for freedom, and that contact and our conversation brought China and her problems still nearer to me. Long ago, between 1905 and 1913, when I was in South Africa, I was in constant touch with the small Chinese colony in Johannesburg. I knew them first as clients and then as comrades in the Indian passive resistance struggle in South Africa. I

1. This letter was drafted by Jawaharlal. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Also printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 674-676.

came in touch with them in Mauritius also. I learnt then to admire their thrift, industry, resourcefulness and internal unity. Later in India I had a very fine Chinese friend living with me for a few years and we all learnt to like him.²

I have thus felt greatly attracted towards your great country and, in common with my countrymen, our sympathy has gone out to you in your terrible struggle. Our mutual friend Jawaharlal Nehru, whose love of China is only excelled if at all by his love of his own country, has kept us in intimate touch with the developments of the Chinese struggle.

Because of this feeling I have towards China and my earnest desire that our two great countries should come closer to one another and co-operate to their mutual advantage, I am anxious to explain to you that my appeal to the British power to withdraw from India is not meant in any shape or form to weaken India's defence against the Japanese or embarrass you in your struggle. India must not submit to any aggressor or invader and must resist him. I would not be guilty of purchasing the freedom of my country at the cost of your country's freedom. That problem does not arise before me as I am clear that India cannot gain her freedom in this way, and a Japanese domination of either India or China would be equally injurious to the other country and to world peace. That domination must therefore be prevented and I should like India to play her natural and rightful part in this.

I feel India cannot do so while she is in bondage. India has been a helpless witness of the withdrawals from Malaya, Singapore and Burma. We must learn the lesson from these tragic events and prevent by all means at our disposal a repetition of what befell these unfortunate countries. But unless we are free, we can do nothing to prevent it, and the same process might well occur again, crippling India and China disastrously. I do not want a repetition of this tragic tale of woe.

Our proffered help has repeatedly been rejected by the British Government and the recent failure of the Cripps mission has left a deep wound which is still running. Out of that anguish has come the cry for immediate withdrawal of British power so that India can look after herself and help China to the best of her ability.

I have told you of my faith in nonviolence³ and of my belief in the effectiveness of this method if the whole nation could turn to it. That

2. He was a poet and Mahatma Gandhi had given him the name Shanti.

3. Madame Chiang in her letter to Jawaharlal on 22 June 1942 stated: "I know how hard you must have worked on Gandhiji to make him commit himself to the extent he has written, for if you remember, when we saw him at Calcutta his whole attitude towards possible Japanese invasion was that of nonviolence and noncooperation."

faith in it is as firm as ever. But I realise that India today as a whole has not that faith and belief, and the government in free India would be formed by the various elements composing the nation.

Today the whole of India is impotent and feels frustrated (the Indian Army consists largely of people who have joined up because of economic pressure). They have no feeling of a cause to fight for, and in no sense are they a national army. Those of us who would fight for a cause, for India and China, with armed forces or with nonviolence, cannot, under the foreign heel, function as they want to. And yet our people know for certain that free India can play even a decisive part not only on her own behalf, but also on behalf of China and world peace. Many, like me, feel that it is not proper or manly to remain in this helpless state and allow events to overwhelm us when a way to effective action can be opened to us. They feel, therefore, that every possible effort should be made to ensure independence and that freedom of action which is so urgently needed. This is the origin of my appeal to the British power to end immediately the unnatural connection between Britain and India.

Unless we make that effort there is grave danger of public feeling in India going into wrong and harmful channels. There is every likelihood of subterranean sympathy for Japan growing simply in order to weaken and oust British authority in India. This feeling may take the place of robust confidence in our ability never to look to outsiders for help in winning our freedom. We have to learn self-reliance and develop the strength to work out for our own salvation. This is only possible if we make a determined effort to free ourselves from bondage. That freedom has become a present necessity to enable us to take our due place among the free nations of the world.

To make it perfectly clear that we want to prevent in every way Japanese aggression, I would personally agree, and I am sure that government of free India would agree, that the Allied powers might, under treaty with us, keep their armed forces in India and use the country as a base for operations against the threatened Japanese attack.

I need hardly give you my assurance that, as the author of the new move in India, I shall take no hasty action. And whatever action I may recommend will be governed by the consideration that it should not injure China, or encourage Japanese aggression in India or China. I am trying to enlist world opinion in favour of a proposition which to me appears self-proved and which must lead to the strengthening of India's and China's defence. I am also educating public opinion in India and conferring with my colleagues. Needless to say any movement against the British Government with which I may be connected

will be essentially nonviolent. I am straining every nerve to avoid a conflict with British authority. But if in the vindication of the freedom which has become an immediate desideratum, this becomes inevitable, I shall not hesitate to run any risk however great.

Very soon you will have completed 5 years of war against Japanese aggression and invasion and all the sorrow and misery that these have brought to China. My heart goes out to the people of China in deep sympathy and in admiration for their heroic struggle and endless sacrifices in the cause of their country's freedom and integrity against tremendous odds. I am convinced that this heroism and sacrifice cannot be in vain; they must bear fruit. To you, to Madame Chiang and to the great people of China, I send my earnest and sincere wishes for your success. I look forward to the day when a free India and a free China will cooperate together in friendship and brotherhood for their own good and for the good of Asia and the world.

In anticipation of your permission, I am taking the liberty of publishing this letter in *Harijan*.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. Gandhi

12. The Passion that Moves Gandhi¹

Question: Would you throw some light on Gandhiji's contemplated civil disobedience movement?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It would be improper for me to state what the Congress would do under the present circumstances. It is for the Congress Working Committee to take any decision about the contemplated mass movement and it is for the Congress President to indicate such decisions.

Q: We would appreciate your throwing some light on your talks with Mahatma Gandhi?

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 16 June 1942. From *The Hindu*, 18 June 1942.

JN: Since the Cripps negotiations, I had not seen Gandhiji and as much has happened since then, on my return from Kulu I hurried to Wardha and spent a few hours with him. That was not enough, and so I went again to him in company with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, and we had long talks with him. We naturally discussed various aspects of the situation as it faced us, and I hope we understood each other in a large measure. I was myself greatly gratified to find how near we were to each other, as we have been in the past, in spite of different approaches and occasional differences of opinion. In a complex situation, it is inevitable that there should be different approaches and varying emphases, but it is the fundamentals that matter. As I talked to Mahatma Gandhi and tried to follow his argument, I saw a passion in his eyes and also heard it in his words; and I knew that that passion was the passion of India—the passion that is moving vast numbers of Indians today. In a much smaller measure, I too have experienced that passion and I know what it means. Before that mighty urge of the people petty arguments and controversies become small and without much meaning. This is the fundamental aspect of the Indian problem today, and if we lose sight of it and become involved in the smaller aspects of the question, over which we may or may not differ, then we err grievously. What the future will bring to us or to the world, I do not know. But I do know that the situation in India is becoming intolerable to many who feel that they cannot carry on as impassive spectators of the deeds of others.

When Mahatma Gandhi says to the British 'Withdraw', he says something which every self-respecting Indian feels. I have ventured to say that previously in a cruder language when I said "get out".² What does this mean? It does not mean, of course, that Englishmen as individuals should pack up and go. It means transfer of political power completely, or a decision on the part of the British to do so without raising any arguments about what we are supposed to do about it. Naturally, if such things are done amicably, every care is taken to prevent any catastrophe or anything that might injuriously affect the defence of India; but the essential thing is that the British Government must accept the independence of India in its entirety. Only then, I think, can we consider other problems in a suitable atmosphere and against a proper background.

One thing is certain. There is going to be no peace between us and England except on that basis. I realise that the British Government as constituted today, is not likely to act in the desired direction in the near

2. See *ante*, p. 33.

future. That is a misfortune for us, for England, and for the cause England claims to be fighting for. But that is going to make no difference to us now and whatever the consequences or risks, we shall carry on in our own way.

Most people know that I have long been an opponent of fascism and Nazism. I am convinced today, more than ever, that these doctrines are a menace to the freedom and peace of the world, whether they are introduced from abroad or are of indigenous growth. I have repeatedly warned my countrymen against them, and I have tried to prevent any development which might even indirectly help those nations which subscribe to those doctrines. In particular, my heart has gone out to the people of China, to whom I pledged my word, and in a sense the word of India, years ago. I am not going to be false to that pledge and I shall do everything in my power to honour it. But the conviction has grown in me that for India to help China in her present need, it is essential for India to be free. We have done precious little in the past to help her and we can do precious little in the future if we remain as we are. Therefore, both from the national as well as from the international point of view, the question of Indian independence in the present becomes of paramount importance.

Recently, Mahatma Gandhi has, in his desire not to come in the way of the defence of India from aggression, said something which is extraordinary, coming from him. He has agreed to the presence of foreign troops in India³ to fight the aggressor, provided they are here as allies of a free country under treaty with India. That itself shows his extreme desire to bring the national and international aspects of the problem together, and thus to avoid any conflict between them. It also shows his extreme desire not to do anything which might injure the cause of China.

Q: Would you like to comment on the Anglo-Soviet agreement?⁴

JN: The Anglo-Soviet alliance may be good for Britain and for the Soviet Union, and it might possibly be good to other governments or countries. But, as an Indian and as an Asiatic, I cannot view the agreement between other powers without a measure of apprehension. Where does Asia come in? Where does India come in, or even China come in? One thing

3. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan* of 14 June 1942, "Britain and America, and other countries too, can keep their armies here and use Indian territory as a base for military operations."

4. See *ante*, p. 344.

is certain, namely, that the present political and economic structure of the world, which has brought about this War, is played out. It is the root of evil, out of which wars will continue to come until it is radically altered. To think in terms of maintaining it, is to miss the entire significance of events and to try to maintain the *status quo* which is doomed and must disappear. Whatever happens in this War, one fact stands out, and that is that Asia is not going to take things lying down, and certainly not India.

Q: What possible support, do you think, would Congress get from the masses in any future movement that might be launched?

JN: It is always difficult to judge the psychological or other reactions of large masses. Previously I said Gandhiji reflected in a large measure the passion of India which meant the mass opinion of India and mass urge. My own impression is that in spite of all manner of varying tendencies in India, sometimes quite contrary to each other, there is today a very general looking up to the Congress even among many people who have nothing to do with the Congress.

This is chiefly due to the external events, to the shaking up of all the people's minds by the War and its consequences, as also to the belief that the present order in India is bound to go. Looking round, therefore, the only nucleus around which the masses might gather appears to them to be the Congress. In the masses I include specially the intelligentsia also.

Q: What do you have to say with regard to the suspicion that prevails in certain quarters that once India gets power she may not take part in the war against Japan?

JN: But there is no question of India aligning herself with Japan or any of the Axis powers even if she is in a position to do so. I have expressed myself fairly strongly against the Axis powers. As a matter of fact, Mahatma Gandhi has also expressed himself strongly against fascism and Nazism. As far as the support to Britain is concerned, we shall not forget that every nation does what it considers best for its own interests. The defence of India is primarily India's concern and a free India would defend herself to her utmost and would align herself with those who would help her in doing so. Even if we had sympathies with certain countries, we could remain neutral. But how long we can maintain that neutrality is a different matter. We see every country dragged

into the War. The position today is that we cannot wipe out the events of the last two or three years.' The question of India remaining neutral hardly arises. India's armies are on so many fronts, and I do not see how a free India can remain neutral. Nationalist India or the Congress has not been neutral in its attitude to the War. It has had its sympathies with a certain cause and with certain countries like China.

Q: The government has commandeered the premises of an educational institution in the Central Provinces for war purposes. What are your views about it?

JN: I recognise that military necessity might require evacuation and taking over of buildings, but the government should see that proper facilities are afforded to those affected by such orders. In China and in Spain education was not only not neglected but pushed forward in spite of wars raging there. This was because the national government there could sacrifice everything but not the welfare of the future generations. I agree with the suggestion that spacious buildings like the Vice-regal lodge could very well be used for such purposes. This is not a serious matter but just shows the difference between a national government and a foreign government.

Q: What do you have to say about Rajagopalachari's stand?

JN: Rajaji's activities have been singularly misguided from the country's point of view, from mine and equally from Rajaji's. After all he has adopted this attitude in order to gain certain results that he desires. But he has probably succeeded in making the problem more difficult.

Q: Rajagopalachari has suggested that you and Jinnah should meet for a solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem.⁵ What have you to say to this?

JN: So far as I am concerned, and I believe so far as any Congressman is concerned, we would willingly meet Mr. Jinnah if that serves the cause we have at heart.

5. Rajagopalachari suggested this in his speech at Madurai on 15 June 1942: "Incitement of organisational wrath against me is not action. It is not an alternative programme. I do not care what happens to me. It is enough if Pandit Jawaharlal and Mr. Jinnah bestir themselves and achieve the one thing that is now needed in this crisis and which will save the country and lead the nation to the shore of stable honour and freedom."

But obviously such a meeting can only be profitable, if there is some common subject to discuss on which there is a measure of basic agreement, even though there might be a great deal of disagreement otherwise. For instance, there is no particular point in our discussing Pakistan, because we have no common ground on that issue. But it would be very much to the point if we discussed the means of achieving independence for India or, to put it more definitely, eliminating foreign authority from India, leaving ourselves free to determine problems without foreign interference. If that could be the common basis, Mr. Jinnah could certainly continue to hold his opinion with regard to Pakistan while I could continue to hold my opinion in opposition to it, that is, we joined together on a fundamental issue, leaving the conflict on another issue unsolved for the moment. It is possible that in this way cooperation on a common issue might lead to a solution of other issues also or if not then we face those other issues as between ourselves later on. Or else, as the Congress President has suggested, the representatives of the Congress and the League might meet and consider the various possibilities of having a common front. That suggestion itself, he said in reply to a question, was an initiative. Unfortunately in various public speeches of the leaders of the Muslim League, it has been rejected.⁶ The whole point is that there should be a common ground on the basic issue of Indian independence. That is the withdrawal of the foreign power from India. With this, the other problems are simplified tremendously. That was why I ventured to say at Delhi, after the Cripps negotiations were over, that I could not conceive of Mr. Jinnah or Mr. Savarkar being opposed to the attitude the Congress had taken up regarding the Cripps proposals. Because all that we said was that political power should be transferred from the British to Indian hands. The other question as to how that political power should be controlled and administered in India might certainly raise communal and other issues. But we never reached that point and therefore no communal issue was raised before Sir Stafford Cripps.

6. Jinnah, Khaliqzaman and Muhammad Ismail Khan, in their speeches at Bombay on 27 May 1942, stated that there could be no agreement between the Congress and the League until the League's demand of Pakistan was accepted by the Congress. Khaliqzaman said in Ahmedabad on 31 May 1942: "Even now if the Congress accepted Pakistan, as Mr. Rajagopalachari was prepared to do, the relations between the two communities might be restored, or else the path of India would be full of troubles and miseries."

13. To Mohammad Yunus¹

Allahabad
June 22, 1942

My dear Yunus,

I sent you a letter today.² Soon after I received your second letter. In my previous letter I have given some suggestions as to what Badshah Khan might say in a kind of a preface to your book.

I am glad to learn that the hubbub over Marium's³ marriage is dying down, in spite of the efforts of the interested parties. In such matters, it seems to me, that the only right course is to stick to the correct position.

I think that the next two weeks will probably bring far-reaching developments in India, both in the war situation and in the domestic situation. I hope Badshah Khan realises this. We have to keep ready for all these developments.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. See *post*, section 12, item 7.

3. Daughter of Dr. Khan Sahib. She married a Christian.

14. To James Lampton Berry¹

Allahabad
June 23, 1942

Dear Mr. Berry,

Thank you for your letter of June 20th conveying Colonel Johnson's

1. *A Bunch of Old Letters*, (Bombay, 1960), pp. 492-493.

message² which I welcomed. I have also read Mr. Welles's³ speech⁴ with interest. I am very glad to learn that Colonel Johnson is well on his way to health and I hope he will be fit and well soon. I hope you will convey my warm regards to him and tell him that I think of him often.

I can quite understand that some of Mr. Gandhi's recent statements have been misunderstood in the United States. Perhaps his later statements have helped to clear up this misunderstanding. One thing is certain: Mr. Gandhi wants to do everything in his power to prevent a Japanese invasion and occupation of India. He wants to rouse up the people of the country to resist and not to submit. He has been oppressed by the fact that British policy in India is producing just the opposite results and antagonising the people so much that they are developing a mood which prefers any change, however bad, to the existing state of affairs. This is a dangerous and harmful tendency which he wishes to combat.

After Malaya and Burma there is a widespread belief in India that so far as the British Government in India is concerned there is no serious intention, or capacity, to resist Japanese invasion, especially in Bengal. Confidential circulars issued by the authorities in Bengal to their officers dealt fully with the methods of evacuation and how superior officers should get away leaving their subordinates in charge. These subordinates were actually told to carry on their normal work under the orders of the enemy, as this was apparently in accordance with international law. Such instructions do not encourage resistance. They are essentially defeatist. The way the Madras Government behaved about two

2. Johnson's message read: "I have the greatest sympathy for you in your position. I want you to know that I have in no way changed my personal opinion and I shall act in accordance therewith on my return to Washington. I am very happy over the speeches that you have made advocating continued opposition to Japanese aggression. I think you should know that Mr. Gandhi's statements are being misunderstood in the United States and are being construed as opposing our aims. I hope you have seen Mr. Welles's recent speech. In case you have not, you can obtain a copy from Berry. My warmest regards."
3. Summer Welles (1892-1961); American Ambassador to Cuba, 1933; Assistant Secretary of State, 1933-37; Under Secretary of State, 1937-43.
4. In his Post War Plan Memorial Day speech on 30 May 1942, Welles declared: "If this War is in fact a War for the liberation of peoples, it must assure the sovereign equality of people throughout the world... Our victory must bring in its train the liberation of all peoples. Discrimination between people because of their race, creed or colour must be abolished. The age of imperialism is ended. The rights of the people must be recognised... The principles of the Atlantic Charter must be guaranteed to the world as a whole—in all oceans, in all countries."

months ago was also extraordinary.⁵ At the rumour of a possible invasion (which turned out later to be untrue) they fled.

Even if the intention is to offer determined resistance at a later stage, the mere fact that Bengal has fallen will have far-reaching repercussions all over India. It is quite likely that in many rural areas, far from any troop concentrations, civil administration may gradually fade away. This again will inevitably affect the military situation and weaken it.

How far American planes and other kinds of help have altered the situation I do not know. But essentially the situation cannot be very different from what it was two months ago. No Indian can view this prospect with equanimity. It means Japanese occupation of important parts of the country and growing chaos in many other parts. And yet we feel that this can be checked. In a purely military sense we cannot do much in the near future and operation must depend on the Allied forces in India. But the acknowledgment of India's independence and the establishment of a national government here will electrify the atmosphere and make all the difference in the world. Even if unfortunately the Japanese occupy certain parts of the country, the rest does not crack up but carries on aggressively as in China. A spirit of passive resignation gives place to active opposition and resistance.

Indian independence therefore becomes of paramount importance today for purposes of Indian defence in cooperation with the Allied forces, as well as for helping China. It is only in this context of to-day's problem that it has to be considered.

For those of us who have to shoulder a measure of responsibility, it is not enough to function as individuals, although that has also to be done. We must get others to act and generally to influence public opinion in the right direction. I have been endeavouring to do this. On no account do I want India to be submissive to any aggression. I want active and continuous resistance to it. But if that is to be at all effective, then the British Government in India must give place to a free national government. This will not interfere with the military dispositions or arrangements for defence.

In my last letter to you I mentioned that Mr. Gandhi's letter to the Generalissimo, would be published in the *Harijan* on June 21st. Almost at the last moment a message was received by us that the Generalissimo would like the publication to be postponed. We just managed to do this but it involved the destruction of ten thousand copies.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. See *ante*, p. 274.

15. Message to the Aligarh District Conference¹

I am sorry I cannot attend this conference. It is difficult for me to attend district conferences now because of my preoccupation with other important work. It is good, however, for such conferences to be held even in these days of crisis.

But a conference would serve little purpose if we thought of it in terms of past years. Conditions have changed completely and we stand in the midst of war and on the verge of great changes. For us now it is not just a question of expressing our opinion about various matters or making demands. We have today to keep vigilant and be ready for instant action lest events overwhelm us.

We discuss amongst ourselves matters of high policy. But whatever our policy might be, the work we have to do remains the same. Every policy demands strength and organized effort behind it. Without it the policy fails. With it even a partially wrong policy may well lead to some results.

It is essential therefore for all our workers, all Congressmen and all the people of our province to realise the paramount importance of this work in hand, so that we might get our house in order and be ready for all emergencies. To remain passive spectators is to injure our cause and humiliate ourselves. That way leads to servility and subjection to whatever power or powers may triumph in this War. We have long continued our struggle for freedom and independence against the British power in India. We cannot submit to it or accept the status of a subject nation.

But we have also to remember that on no account and whatever the future may bring, we cannot submit to a new invader, Japanese or German or any other. It is a difficult task for us to keep up our flag of freedom against all who deny it and refuse to recognise it. But however difficult, we have to do it and pay the cost, whatever it might be. The alternative is a continuation of our slavery.

If we had been a free and independent country today, we would have faced all the perils that might encompass us with good heart and with the strength which comes from the union of a free people with their own government. I am sure that in spite of our present condition, disarmed and untrained as we are for defence, we would have given good

1. Allahabad, 22 June 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The eleventh session of the Aligarh District Conference was held on 26 and 27 June.

account of ourselves and preserved the freedom of our country. Unfortunately that freedom has been denied to us and because of that denial the situation, not only for us but for those with whom we have sympathy, like China and Russia, as well as their allies, has grown more critical. Even at this last hour the real solution is the recognition of Indian independence. Without it the Indian people cannot function and their great strength is tied up and lies unused.

But whatever the British Government may or may not do, we cannot remain passive. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance for us to organise ourselves and to carry out the programme of self-protection and self-sufficiency in every part of our province. We have to enroll volunteers also for this purpose. This is not a party programme but a national programme in which we must cooperate with all our countrymen who feel like us and desire to maintain the freedom and dignity of India and to protect our people, as far as we can, from the dangers inherent in the situation. I hope, therefore, that the Aligarh District Conference will pay particular attention to this organisation for self-sufficiency and self-protection and will also have stout groups of volunteers all over the district. Aligarh has been one of our good districts in this province and the peasantry of Aligarh especially has a fine record in the national struggle. I hope they will live up to that record in the days to come.

Every Congressman must realise that Congress discipline has to be maintained. Those who do not agree with the fundamental Congress policy must function outside the Congress. It is not right or proper for them to misuse the Congress name or the Congress platform for purposes which are opposed to Congress policy. Our Congress organisation in the United Provinces has been attacked and is being daily harassed by the government of this province. Our President and our Secretary and important colleagues are in prison. A greater responsibility therefore devolves upon us.

There is far too much softness and waiting for events among our people. This is not the way a brave nation behaves. This is not the way a people hankering for freedom behave. We must be up and doing and we must be perfectly clear that we will submit to no alien authority and no invader, however soft-speaking he might be. There is going to be no peace in this country till India is independent.

As I write this message, my mind goes to the magnificent resistance of the Chinese people and of the Russian people against aggression and invasion. It is five years since the Sino-Japanese War began and during all this long period of intense suffering and sacrifice, the Chinese people have not flinched. Today is the anniversary of the German attack on Russia. For a year now the Russian people have fought with amazing

heroism in defence of their country. Let us take heart from these examples of heroic courage and endurance, and let us not grow panicky or excited because war comes to India. If we keep cool, well-organised and self-reliant, we shall face every contingency with confidence. Our programme of self-protection and self-sufficiency, if carried out, will give us that self-reliance.

I hope that the Aligarh District Conference will give this lead not only to the people of the district but to the people of our province. We have great problems to face, the problems of poverty and unemployment, the agrarian problem. All these have to be faced and solved. But to-day everything must take a second place before this major problem of preserving ourselves and not falling a prey to further subjection or internal chaos.

16. Mahatma Gandhi's Letter to President Roosevelt¹

Sevagram
1 July, 1942

Dear Friend,

I twice missed coming to your great country. I have the privilege of having numerous friends there both known and unknown to me. Many of my countrymen have received and are still receiving higher education in America. I know too that several have taken shelter there. I have profited greatly by the writings of Thoreau² and Emerson.³ I say this to tell you how much I am connected with your country. Of Great Britain I need say nothing beyond mentioning that in spite of my intense dislike of British rule, I have numerous personal friends in England whom I love as dearly as my own people. I had my legal education there. I have therefore nothing but good wishes for your country and Great Britain. You will therefore accept my word that my present proposal, that the British should unreservedly and without reference to the wishes of the people of India immediately withdraw their rule, is prompted by the friendliest intention. I would like to turn into goodwill

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 677-678.
2. Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862); American philosopher; his works include *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849) and *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854).
3. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882); American essayist and poet; his works include *Essays* (1841-44), *Society and Solitude* (1870), *Letters and Social Aims* (1876), *National History of the Intellect* (1893).

the ill will which, whatever may be said to the contrary, exists in India towards Great Britain and thus enable the millions of India to play their part in the present War.

My personal position is clear. I hate all war. If, therefore, I could persuade my countrymen, they would make a most effective and decisive contribution in favour of an honourable peace. But I know that all of us have not a living faith in nonviolence. Under foreign rule however we can make no effective contribution of any kind in this War, except as helots.

The policy of the Indian National Congress, largely guided by me, has been one of non-embarrassment to Britain, consistently with the honourable working of the Congress, admittedly the largest political organisation, of the longest standing in India. The British policy as exposed by the Cripps mission and rejected by almost all parties has opened our eyes and has driven me to the proposal I have made. I hold that the full acceptance of my proposal and that alone can put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis. I venture to think that the Allied declaration that the Allies are fighting to make the world safe for freedom of the individual and for democracy sounds hollow, so long as India and, for that matter, Africa are exploited by Great Britain, and America has the Negro problem in her own home. But in order to avoid all complications, in my proposal I have confined myself only to India. If India becomes free, the rest must follow, if it does not happen simultaneously.

In order to make my proposal fool-proof I have suggested that, if the Allies think it necessary, they may keep their troops, at their own expense in India, not for keeping internal order but for preventing Japanese aggression and defending China. So far as India is concerned, she must become free even as America and Great Britain are. The Allied troops will remain in India during the war under treaty with the free India government that may be formed by the people of India without any outside interference, direct or indirect.

It is on behalf of this proposal that I write this to enlist your active sympathy.

I hope that it would commend itself to you.

Mr. Louis Fischer is carrying this letter to you.

If there is any obscurity in my letter, you have but to send me word and I shall try to clear it.

I hope finally that you will not resent this letter as an intrusion but take it as an approach from a friend and well-wisher of the Allies.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,
M.K. Gandhi

17. A Vote of No-Confidence¹

Some members of the British Parliament have given notice of a motion of no-confidence² in the central direction of the War. That means the British War Cabinet; that means Mr. Winston Churchill. This motion may be talked out, or ultimately withdrawn, or defeated overwhelmingly. Mr. Churchill is still strong enough in Parliament to meet these assaults. Probably he is strong enough though not so strong, in the country also. Nevertheless it is clear that there is a mounting tide of dissatisfaction against those in high authority in England. Mr. Churchill came in as a positive and inevitable choice; he remains as Prime Minister for negative reasons. Who else can take his place? For the Englishman the answer is not easy and he looks round in vain. The vital test of war has shown up the utter poverty and mediocrity of British leadership. Peace-time reputations have been progressively deflated and no new star has yet arisen on the horizon. And so Mr. Churchill will continue yet for a while with the negative goodwill of the British people. But behind that almost unwilling consent, there is a deep suspicion that much is wrong.

In Britain the people can, in the final analysis, choose their leaders and their captains, though that choice is often forced by circumstances upon them, and they choose unwillingly. What would be the fate of a motion of no-confidence in the British Government in India, if such could be put to the Indian people? In other than official ways, the question has always been there and so has the answer. But it is interesting to speculate what the formal answer might be.

We know what the Congress answer would be; we know also what the Muslim League's answer would be, in spite of its reactionary leadership which is always looking up to the British Government for some additional support. We know indeed what the answer of every well-known organisation in India would be. But organisations apart, everyone knows, that the hundreds of millions of India would troop up and vote against the British Government and its representatives in India. Pack

1. Article written by Jawaharlal on 30 June 1942. *National Herald*, 3 July 1942.
2. The long succession of British defeats, culminating in the fall of Tobruk on 21 June 1942, led to a motion of censure in the House of Commons moved by Sir John Wardlaw-Milne and seconded by Admiral Sir Roger Keyes. It expressed "no confidence in the central direction of the war." The debate was fixed for 21st July.

up and go and leave us to ourselves, we have had enough of you, would be the thundering cry from those hundreds of millions of throats or, as Maulana Mohamed Ali used to say, do not pack up but go. There would be the mightiest vote in history, a whole people voting on one side, and hardly a soul on the other. Even those who cling to the British Government in India, through fear or favour, will line up with those who want to get rid of it. For everyone knows what they have in their hearts and the measure of their attachment to British rule.

It is natural and inevitable for Indians to wish to get rid of the British Government in India. But it is surprising to find how every Indian bitterly dislikes this government. And not in India only but in all countries of Asia, this dislike is widespread and intense. That is the final judgment on British imperialism and we need not go to history to seek an answer. The present shouts out that answer and behind that answer there is a warning and a prophesy. For this is the nemesis of empire. Humpty Dumpty has fallen and not all the King's men, nor all the King's horses, will set him up again.

And yet Mr. Churchill and his colleagues talk still of Empire and, what is worse, behave in the old imperialist way. And when disasters come they seek superficial explanations and find trivial remedies. The real explanation is Empire, the real remedy is the complete liquidation of that Empire. Not through Empire will they gain the ear or heart of Asia, and Asia counts and will count. The voice of Asia, so long silent, is loud and insistent, and it is India's privilege today to speak not on her own behalf only but for Asia as a whole, as well as for all the subject peoples of the world.

Victory today is not just a matter of military tactics or high strategy. It is inescapably connected with what happens to the millions of Asia for they may well play the deciding role. It is connected with moral issues, economic issues and political issues. It is connected with what happens to India and in India.

What a government we have in this unhappy land! It is a foreign government and we would object to it in any event even if it was an efficient one. But it has not a single merit left, except a passionate desire to hold on to its privileged position, if that be counted a merit. There is no mind left in it, no capacity for intelligent and effective action, no competence, no will to achieve or to win through. It distrusts everybody in India and it even distrusts itself. Inevitably it reminds us of the last days of the Manchus in China.

We must deplore the growth of the spirit of hatred in India for out of hatred alone no great work is done. Hatred may be a driving force but it is self-destructive also, and the cooperative commonwealth of man

that we look forward to will not come out of the morass of hatred. And yet hatred and ill will must inevitably emerge from the barbarous relationships that an empire establishes and promotes. We want a civilised relationship between man and man and nation and nation.

So Empire must go, not only because it is evil but because it is a hindrance to victory of the progressive forces in the world. That is why the cry of 'Quit India' becomes a vital, urgent and essential cry for victory. Only when this is done will there be a real will to win among the Indian people as well as among the people of England and other Allied countries. Only then will all strength and energy seize the people of India and be translated into effective action.

18. Time to Wrest Independence¹

We do not want the Germans or the Japanese to come to India. We will fight them with or without arms. Like the British the Japanese also broadcast sweet words promising freedom to India, but the truth is that none of them wants to give independence to India unless compelled to do so. The situation is worsening every day. The Germans have entered Egypt² and the Japanese have reached the borders of India. I regret that the British have themselves been inviting trouble. Unless they make up their mind to free India and other enslaved countries of the world there would be no end to their troubles.

Mahatma Gandhi is about to launch a satyagraha movement or is contemplating some other move to wrest independence, and you should keep yourself in readiness. None can foretell what would happen after the War. My view is that we cannot protect the country while we remain in bondage. This is why Mahatma Gandhi wants the British Government to withdraw and leave the defence of the country in the hands of Indians. We have waited for long and we could have waited for a year or two more, but owing to the war we can wait no longer. We cannot see India changing masters from time to time. It can spell disaster for her. Therefore, it becomes imperative for us to free India

1. Speech at a public meeting, Gorakhpur, 3 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 4 July 1942.

2. On 27 June 1942 the Axis powers crossed the frontiers of Egypt.

and then fight the Japanese or any other invader with arms or without arms.

I believe that it will not be easy for the Japanese to conquer India. China is a big country and the Chinese have been fighting the Japanese for the last five years. They have sacrificed at least fifty to sixty lakhs of persons, and have not yielded so far. If we were independent we could also resist any enemy. It is difficult to prophesy what is in store for us, but the world is passing through critical times and we can only protect ourselves by discarding fear and organizing the country. I appeal for unity among the various communities and organizations to protect the country and achieve freedom.

19. Need for Large Sacrifices¹

Indians at the moment being a subject nation, cannot help China. Britain professes to be fighting for freedom and democracy. Yet she denies these to the peoples in her Empire. The result is that subjugated people like Indians have developed resentment and hatred towards Britain. That is the reason why Malaya and Burma fell so quickly. If India is given her freedom, Indians will fight with the same zeal and enthusiasm as the Chinese and the Russians. For a present-day war, a nation's full cooperation is essential. The present government in India cannot get that cooperation.

The government continues to follow its peace-time policy of sowing seeds of disunity, which became evident from the Cripps proposals. The government's discrimination against Indians in the treatment of evacuees caused much resentment. As long as the government's treatment continues to be such, I for one cannot support such a government.

But events are fast moving in the world, and India cannot remain unaffected. Indians cannot sit idle. At the present time it is essential that the British should leave India for the protection of their country and for helping China. If only the British declared that they would leave the country, India could form a provisional government in two or three days and then decide on its policy for meeting aggression and helping China.

1. Speech at Nagpur, 5 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 6 July 1942.

Unfortunately Mr. Jinnah's whole attention is given to the British Government.² He wants the British Government to do everything for him. The same attitude is being adopted by the Hindu Mahasabha.³ For the sake of our own freedom and for the good of the world we should decide what we should do now. In a world where revolutionary changes are taking place, Indians cannot remain aloof. I want India to rise from its slumber even if ten to fifteen lakhs of people have to die. We must be ready for big sacrifices.

2. In a press statement issued on 22 June 1942, Jinnah said : "So now we are presented with a new formula and that formula is 'Quit India'. I am told that there is going to be a big move. This threat and intimidation is intended to coerce a distressed and shaken Britain to accede to Mr. Gandhi's demand. I can only say that Britain will be making the greatest blunder if they surrender to the Congress in any manner which would be detrimental to the interests of Muslim India Nothing is going to move us from the set purpose of achieving our goal to Pakistan."
3. The Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha stated on 16 June 1942: "To talk of nonviolent noncooperation in organising resistance to the invader is to live in a fool's paradise. . . . The Hindu Mahasabha will rather perish than submit to foreign rule or to a new invader but would not indulge in beautiful talk." On 5 July 1942, Savarkar, commenting on the expansion of the Viceroy's Executive Council, stated that "the British must offer voluntarily so completely a political freedom and power to India as to render it impossible for any enemy of Britain to offer anything more alluring to lead India astray."

20. Develop the Spirit of Resistance¹

Whatever we do, our desire and intention are clear that we do not wish to injure the cause of China or the defence of India. It is obvious that any step we may take against the British Government may be full of perils, but on the other hand not taking any step is still more perilous. We have to choose the lesser danger. It has become highly important to raise the spirit of resistance so as ultimately to resist the Japanese. By passively submitting to conditions in India today that spirit of resistance will be lost. The problem before the Congress is to take such steps as to increase the people's spirit of resistance and in such a way as to

1. Interview to the press, Wardha, 8 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 10 July 1942.

avoid, in so far as we can, creating a situation which might temporarily help the Japanese or any foreign invader and come in China's way. This may not be completely possible for the time being because the step we take might involve non-submission to the British authority, thus further complications. But in whatever we do, our desire and intention are clear, that we do not wish to injure the cause of China or the defence of India. The Congress position has very much changed since Sir Stafford Cripps's departure.

The fundamental way to look at Mahatma Gandhi's intention to launch a new movement is how ultimately to increase the strength of the Indian public to meet an invasion. If I am convinced that I might weaken India thereby, I will not take that step.

Events like the Malaya and Burma campaigns are shaping in such a manner that Indian people are becoming more and more passive and sullenly submissive. My fear is that if events are allowed to take their course Indians will get prepared to submit to Japanese invasion. The feeling of submission to Britain leads to the feeling of submission to Japan. I want non-submission and development of resistance to the invader.

The programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection initiated by the Congress aims at giving the Indian people a proper background to develop the spirit of resistance.

21. Congress Working Committee Resolution on British Withdrawal From India

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Mahatma Gandhi's Confidential Draft for the Working Committee, Wardha, 9 July 1942¹

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through confirm the opinion of the Congressmen that British rule must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating men and their possessions; that is to say not merely in the interests of India, but for the safety of the world and for the destruction of Nazism, fascism and whatever other 'ism' Japan stands for. Ever since the outbreak of the War the Congress has studiously pursued the policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment carried to its extreme limit would be duly appreciated, and that enough real power would be transferred to the popular representatives so as to

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Jawaharlal's Confidential Draft for the Working Committee, Wardha, 10 July 1942²

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interests of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

Ever since the outbreak of the World War the Congress has studiously pursued the policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy

1, 2, 3 & 4. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The July resolution on British withdrawal from India was the work of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal. We present here the first draft submitted to the Working Committee, and all the later versions showing the changes after discussions in the Working Committee. For the final resolution passed on 14 July 1942 see the following item.

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*Corrected Confidential Draft,
Wardha, 11 July 1942³*

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself, and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

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*Revised Confidential Draft,
Wardha, 13 July 1942⁴*

Events happening from day to day and the experience that the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism and the aggression of one nation over another.

Even since the outbreak of the World War, the Congress has studiously pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this

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enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India. These hopes have however been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. It has also been observed that the ill will against the British is rapidly increasing and people openly wish success to the Japanese arms. The Congress would like to avoid the experience of Singapore, Malaya and Burma and turn ill will into goodwill and make India a willing partner in their trials and troubles. This is possible only if India feels the glow of freedom from foreign domination.

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of non-embarrassment, carried to its extreme limit, would be duly appreciated, and that enough real power would be transferred to popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India. These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way relaxed. This has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill will against the British and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with great apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. Passive and sullen submission to foreign domination today may lead to an equally passive submission to foreign invasion and to the weakening of the spirit of resistance and non-submission among the people. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Singapore, Malaya and Burma and desires to build up this resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese

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that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its extreme limit, would be duly appreciated, and that enough real power would be transferred to popular representatives so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India.

These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. It is well known that in the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum consistent with the national demand but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Singapore, Malaya and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression or

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policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its logical extreme, would be duly appreciated, and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives, so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India.

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The Congress is convinced that the only cure for this intolerable state of affairs is that the British rule in India should end forthwith. The Congress representatives tried their utmost to come to a settlement. But this has been made impossible by reason of the presence of the foreign power whose history has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after withdrawal of the British power can the wise men and women of the country put their heads together and evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India. When the British power is withdrawn the present unreality will give place to reality and the prince and the peasant will stand on a par, the present political parties formed chiefly with

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or any other foreign power. Submission to or passive acceptance of such aggression would mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection possibly for a long period. The Congress is eager to change the present ill will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations of the world and in the trials and tribulations of the struggle. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom from foreign domination.

The Congress is convinced that the only cure for this intolerable state of affairs is that British rule in India should end forthwith. The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to come to a settlement. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose history has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the recognition of India's independence can the present unreality give place to reality and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. With the ending of foreign domination and intervention, the present political parties formed chiefly with the view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realization

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invasion of India by the Japanese or any other foreign power.

The Congress would change the present ill will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in their trials and tribulations. This is only possible, if India feels the glow of freedom from foreign domination.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose history has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the withdrawal of the British power can the present unreality give place to reality and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with the view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will then probably cease to function. For the

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experience of Singapore, Malaya and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any other foreign power.

The Congress would change the present ill will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom for the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to follow relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination and intervention, can the present unreality give place to reality, and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with a view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will then probably

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an eye to the attention of the British power will probably be dissolved. For the first time in India's history realisation will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories to whom alone all power and authority must belong. In making the proposal for withdrawal the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution

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will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom alone all power and authority must belong. With the recognition of India's independence responsible and representative men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, and later to evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. The first step will have to be a conference between the representatives of free India and the representatives of Great Britain to arrange for the immediate transfer of power and the adjustment of mutual relations, and in particular, for arrangements to be made for the effective defence of India and prevention of any aggression.

In making the proposal for the ending of British rule in India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress

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first time in India's history, realization will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom alone all power and authority must belong. After the withdrawal, responsible and wise men and women of the country are likely to come together and form a provisional government representative of all important sections of the people of India, whose principal function will be to evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people.

In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule in India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any

cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realization will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom all power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British rule in India, responsible and representative men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India which will later evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all section of the people. Representatives of free India and representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and for the cooperation of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the Congress wish to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any

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of the War. The proposed withdrawal therefore should not in any way be interpreted as an invitation to Japan or the other members of the Axis to attack India and thus immediately to suffocate China. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. Therefore the Congress would be reconciled, if the Allies regard it to be necessary to the presence, at their own expense, of their troops in India in order to ward off Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others.

If the withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it is highly likely that there would be little difficulty in establishing a stable provisional government in India. The Congress however is not unmindful of the possibility of a temporary breakdown of the ordered machinery of government. Anarchy may set in and instead of different parties coming together for the common good they may compete with one another in establishing their own authority. It is a risk which has got to be run in any country in order to

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intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. It is the Congress will to help in resistance to all aggression and to enable India to do so effectively and with the people's will and united strength behind it. The Congress is therefore agreeable to and is convinced that free India will permit the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. Withdrawal means the handing over of political control in its entirety to the representatives of the people. If such withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional government in India, and in cooperation between this government and the Allied powers in the common tasks of resisting aggression, defending India, and helping China. If there are any risks involved in such a course, they have to be faced in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater peril. Nevertheless,

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way to encourage aggression on India or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. The Congress will therefore be reconciled, if the Allies regard it to be necessary, to the presence at their own expense of their troops in India in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

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Though therefore the Congress is impatient to achieve the national

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way to encourage aggression on India or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. The Congress is therefore agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, and certainly not those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such withdrawal takes place with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional government in India and cooperation between this government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China.

The Congress realises that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom and more especially at the present critical juncture, in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty

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achieve freedom. The Congress therefore wishes to take no hasty step but would seek the help of the Allies in securing British acceptance of its demand.

Should however the appeal fail, the Congress will be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the non-violent strength it might have gathered since 1920 when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. The struggle this time would have to resolve itself into a mass movement on the widest scale possible involving voluntary strikes, voluntary noncooperation on the part of all those who are in government employ or in departments connected with government in any shape or form and it may involve also non-payment of land revenue and taxes.

For the regulation and quick development of the mass movement the Working Committee authorise Gandhiji to take charge of it and regulate it in the manner he may think advisable. In order that adequate time may be given to the Allied powers to consider and respond to the Congress appeal, as also to educate public opinion and to let the A.I.C.C. share the responsibility with the Working Committee for the tremendous step contemplated, the Committee fixes—for the meeting of the A.I.C.C. until which time the resolution should remain suspended.

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the Congress wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refers them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet at.....on....

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purpose, the Congress wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might unnecessarily embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refers them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet at Wardha on 28th inst.

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step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made, not only in the interest of India but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their adherence.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refers them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet at Wardha on 28th inst.

22. Resolution of Congress Working Committee Passed on 14 July 1942¹

Events happening from day to day, and the experience that the people of India are passing through, confirm the opinion of Congressmen that British rule in India must end immediately, not merely because foreign domination, even at its best, is an evil in itself and a continuing injury to the subject people, but because India in bondage can play no effective part in defending herself and in affecting the fortunes of the War that is desolating humanity. The freedom of India is thus necessary not only in the interest of India but also for the safety of the world and for the ending of Nazism, fascism, militarism and other forms of imperialism, and the aggression of one nation over another.

Ever since the outbreak of the World War, the Congress has studiously pursued a policy of non-embarrassment. Even at the risk of making its satyagraha ineffective, it deliberately gave it a symbolic character, in the hope that this policy of non-embarrassment, carried to its logical extreme, would be duly appreciated, and that real power would be transferred to popular representatives, so as to enable the nation to make its fullest contribution towards the realisation of human freedom throughout the world, which is in danger of being crushed. It had also hoped that negatively nothing would be done which was calculated to tighten Britain's stranglehold on India.

These hopes have, however, been dashed to pieces. The abortive Cripps proposals showed in the clearest possible manner that there was no change in the British Government's attitude towards India and that the British hold on India was in no way to be relaxed. In the negotiations with Sir Stafford Cripps, Congress representatives tried their utmost to achieve a minimum, consistent with the national demand, but to no avail. This frustration has resulted in a rapid and widespread increase of ill will against Britain and a growing satisfaction at the success of Japanese arms. The Working Committee view this development with grave apprehension as this, unless checked, will inevitably lead to a passive acceptance of aggression. The Committee hold that all aggression must be resisted, for any submission to it must mean the degradation of the Indian people and the continuation of their subjection. The Congress is anxious to avoid the experience of Malaya, Singapore and Burma and desires to build up resistance to any aggression on or invasion of India by the Japanese or any foreign power.

1. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 15 July 1942.

The Congress would change the present ill will against Britain into goodwill and make India a willing partner in a joint enterprise of securing freedom of the nations and peoples of the world and in the trials and tribulations which accompany it. This is only possible if India feels the glow of freedom.

The Congress representatives have tried their utmost to bring about a solution of the communal tangle. But this has been made impossible by the presence of the foreign power whose long record has been to pursue relentlessly the policy of divide and rule. Only after the ending of foreign domination and intervention, can the present unreality give place to reality, and the people of India, belonging to all groups and parties, face India's problems and solve them on a mutually agreed basis. The present political parties, formed chiefly with a view to attract the attention of and influence the British power, will then probably cease to function. For the first time in India's history, realization will come home that princes, jagirdars, zamindars, and propertied and monied classes derive their wealth and property from the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially power and authority must belong. On the withdrawal of British rule in India, responsible men and women of the country will come together to form a provisional government, representative of all important sections of the people of India, which will later evolve a scheme whereby a constituent assembly can be convened in order to prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. Representatives of free India and representatives of Great Britain will confer together for the adjustment of future relations and for the cooperation of the two countries as allies in the common task of meeting aggression. It is the earnest desire of the Congress to enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

In making the proposal for the withdrawal of British rule from India, the Congress has no desire whatsoever to embarrass Great Britain or the Allied powers in their prosecution of the War, or in any way to encourage aggression on India or increase pressure on China by the Japanese or any other power associated with the Axis group. Nor does the Congress intend to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the Allied powers. The Congress is therefore agreeable to the stationing of the armed forces of the Allies in India, should they so desire, in order to ward off and resist Japanese or other aggression, and to protect and help China.

The proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all Britishers from India, certainly not of those who would make India their home and live there as citizens and as equals with the others. If such withdrawal takes place

with goodwill, it would result in establishing a stable provisional government in India and cooperation between this government and the United Nations in resisting aggression and helping China.

The Congress realises that there may be risks involved in such a course. Such risks, however, have to be faced by any country in order to achieve freedom and, more especially at the present critical juncture, in order to save the country and the larger cause of freedom the world over from far greater risks and perils.

While, therefore, the Congress is impatient to achieve the national purpose, it wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as is possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations. The Congress would plead with the British power to accept the very reasonable and just proposal herein made, not only in the interest of India but also that of Britain and of the cause of freedom to which the United Nations proclaim their adherence.

Should however this appeal fail, the Congress cannot view without the gravest apprehension the continuation of the present state of affairs, involving a progressive deterioration in the situation and weakening of India's will and power to resist aggression. The Congress will then be reluctantly compelled to utilise all the nonviolent strength it might have gathered since 1920, when it adopted nonviolence as part of its policy for the vindication of political rights and liberty. Such a widespread struggle would inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji. As the issues raised are of the most vital and far-reaching importance to the people of India as well as to the peoples of the United Nations, the Working Committee refer them to the All India Congress Committee for final decision. For this purpose the A.I.C.C. will meet in Bombay on the 7th of August 1942.

23. Demand for British Withdrawal¹

Question: How do you view the difficulties of the interregnum period and the problem of bringing the various parties together for forming a provisional government?

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 16 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 17 July 1942.

Jawaharlal Nehru: If the British Government are brave enough to make the declaration, all these difficulties can be overcome. I want the burden of finding a solution to fall on the Indian people without intervention. If there is no third party to give or take away, the pressure of events would make them come to terms very rapidly.

Q: Why do you want the British to withdraw immediately when earlier you were ready even to accept Cripps's draft declaration?

JN: The demand for immediate withdrawal of British rule from India is made because only when India is free would the spirit of resistance to aggression be infused into the people. There are risks in a sudden withdrawal of the existing governmental apparatus, particularly if this withdrawal takes place in a spirit of ill will instead of goodwill; but these risks are better than the risks that India faces at present.

I am thinking in terms of meeting the present situation. In the present circumstances the people are not prepared to meet the situation in the way I want them to meet it. I do not think the Government of India has the capacity to meet it. The essential thing is to do something which will make India completely different from Burma.

During the last three or four months, we have been fighting a definite pro-Japanese feeling in the country, which is not pro-Japanese essentially but so anti-British that it leans over to the Japanese side. We do not wish India to lapse into a feeling of passivity. There is the obvious danger of any civil disobedience movement indirectly impeding war effort and thereby helping Japanese aggression. We want to avoid that danger as far as we can. But allowing things to remain as they are is a worse danger.

Q: Would a guarantee of Indian independence after the War by the United States and the United Nations satisfy the Congress?

JN: It is not so much a question of what is going to happen after the War. My concern is with the present situation, and the fear of unpleasant and indeed disastrous consequences taking place if we, the British Government and everybody, go on as at present. Your question presumes that possibly we are taking advantage of a particular situation to gain particular ends which may be postponed till after the War. I am not interested at the present moment in what America is going to do after the War. If the United Nations declare very clearly their policies in regard to the Asiatic countries and Africa, it would make a huge difference; but that declaration should not be a declaration as to

what is going to happen after the War. It must be followed up today. That has been our policy from the beginning.

The whole conception of the war as it has been carried on by the Allied powers is wrong, fundamentally wrong. It is a conception of trying to maintain the *status quo*, to maintain the balance as it was before the War, because Hitler might make things worse in the future. The War is not being envisaged as a war of world liberation. There has been no mention throughout about colonial emancipation. Vague phrases have come from America certainly, but not even vague phrases from England. A promise from the United States would certainly be useful but the whole point is how to function in an effective way to avert aggression.

Q: What would be the position after the British withdrawal?

JN: After the withdrawal of British rule the British and Allied Army can stay back. From the military point of view, there is no major change, but the background would certainly change. There is no doubt that, given a stable government, production in India would be far more than at present. Industrialists themselves had told the Grady Mission that production could be increased several times.² The whole urge to increase production which comes from the fact that the producers are doing something for their own country makes an enormous difference. A national government can produce a large force of Home Guards and citizen armies, not only to serve as a reservoir for the actual fighting forces but to release those forces from all manner of other duties in India.

Q: Has the Congress any scheme for the setting up of a machinery to take the place of the British Government?

JN: Suppose the British Government came to a conclusion that from the point of view of larger self-interest it was desirable to accede to the Congress demand, then they should declare so. Thereby they would create an atmosphere in which all these functions can be organised. It depends on whether the thing is done with goodwill or ill will. If it is

2. The American Technical Mission headed by Dr. Henry F. Grady spent about five weeks in India during April-May 1942 investigating India's war production, and sent to Washington about 35 specific recommendations. The report submitted on 9 June 1942 gave a very optimistic picture of the possibility of developing Indian war production to the point where India could become largely self-sufficient within a year with respect to many of her war needs.

done with goodwill there will be no interregnum period in which the country would be without a government. There is in my view no great difficulty as to the provisional government to whom power is to be handed over. I want the burden of finding a solution to fall on the Indian people without any intervention. The only kind of provisional government would be a composite one representing the major parties in India to their satisfaction, namely, the Congress, the Muslim League and other important groups. Any person who is responsible for making that government will have to satisfy these groups. Otherwise he shall face great difficulties at a time when the greatest measure of agreement would be essential. I am sure we will succeed not because of inherent capacity in us but because of the pressure of events. If a real declaration is made, exchange of power and control can take place in a friendly way.

I agree with the suggestion that immediately following the declaration of withdrawal asked for by the Congress, representatives of various parties should meet together and agree upon a provisional government. I am not thinking in terms of the Viceroy sitting in the Viceroy's House and inviting representatives of parties to come together and these representatives responding to that invitation. I am interested in developing all over India a spirit of resistance to Japan. I want that spirit to be strong enough to withstand the shock of two or three military defeats. The appeal for nonviolent resistance has been addressed to the civil population. It is not addressed to the army, which of course would continue to act as all armed forces in the world act in resisting aggression. This War, big as it is, is only a part of a much bigger revolution behind it, economic, racial, colonial and otherwise, which brought it about and would go on even after this War was over. There is some realization of this by President Roosevelt but there is none in Mr. Churchill's mind.

Q: Is there anything to indicate that the Cripps negotiations broke down because it had been indicated to Sir Stafford that the Congress was in favour of peace with Japan?

JN: Early in April it appeared to many of us that there might be a Japanese invasion any day and we were so anxious to face that as a national government that we lowered our demand greatly. Even that was not acceptable. Two results followed from that. One, a greater conviction that it was quite impossible to carry on the government or do anything in cooperation with the British Government, and that we think differently, want to function differently, and distrust each other. Secondly, there was a very big reaction of relief that the negotiations did not

succeed on the basis offered. The people felt that the terms we were on the point of agreeing to were not good enough, and that we had been put in a quandary. It was an honest and healthy reaction; it was not the reaction of extremists like me, but of moderates. It is fantastic to talk about peace with Japan. Sir Stafford himself had stated that the negotiations failed because of nonviolence.³ As a matter of fact, nonviolence was hardly mentioned. If it was mentioned it was mentioned only negatively. What I said to Sir Stafford was that one of the first steps that a national government ought to take in my opinion was to raise a huge citizen army of tens of millions. We talked only in terms of armed defence of the country in cooperation with the Allies. That was the whole basis of discussion. The statement about nonviolence and the report about peace with Japan are equally baseless.

Q: Is there any resentment against the American forces in India on the ground that these forces assist the British Government in India?

JN: There is no resentment against the American forces in India. There undoubtedly is resentment against foreign troops being allowed to fight on India's soil while India is not allowed to function as a free unit, but there is singularly little resentment against Americans themselves. I have never heard of any.

3. See *ante*, pp. 242-243.

24. J.L. Berry's Report of Interview with Jawaharlal¹

16 July 1942

The only guests beside myself were the Chinese Commissioner and the Chinese Minister Designate to Panama. This was not the most satisfactory setting for developing the points I wished to raise with Nehru and the disinclination of the Chinese Commissioner, who despite the good contact of his office appears to know practically nothing about the political situation here, to discuss anything except the difference between

1. Held at New Delhi on 16-17 July 1942. Printed in *Foreign Relations of the United States, Diplomatic Papers 1942*, Volume 1, (Washington, 1960), pp. 685-689.

Buddhism and Hinduism did nothing to help matters. Nehru was obviously in a mood to discuss the resolution and my first question was whether the resolution ruled out negotiations based on a formula providing for something less than absolute independence now. He replied that there could be no further negotiations to arrange deals of transfer of complete power to Indian hands now. I inquired whether acceptance by British of Congress demands put forward during Cripps's Mission would prove acceptable as an interim arrangement. His reply was an unqualified 'no'. He explained that during Cripps's negotiations invasion by Japanese appeared imminent and Congress lowered its demands in order to meet danger with a National Government; that at best the Congress formula provided only a makeshift arrangement involving a divided responsibility which was never successful. I then inquired whether he considered the danger of invasion any less now than in April to which he replied 'probably not but the restlessness and anti-British feeling of Indian people is immeasurably greater'.

He went on to say that two results followed from failure of Cripps's mission: (1) A great conviction that it is quite impossible to carry on government in cooperation with the British Government, and (2) there was a very big reaction of relief that the negotiations did not succeed on the basis offered as the people felt that the terms which the Congress had proposed were not good enough. He declared that even if Cripps had agreed to the Congress demands, it would have been extremely difficult for it to have delivered the goods under such a scheme; to do so now would be 'quite impossible'. He concluded this part of the discussion by saying that British acceptance of Congress demands made to Cripps coupled with 'absolute promise of independence on cessation of hostilities and unqualified by any mention of Pakistan would likewise be unsatisfactory at this stage. The Indian people he said are now intensely anti-British and cannot trust any promise of the British Government. The underwriting of such a British promise by United Nations or by President Roosevelt might do some good in helping to reassure Indian people but 'it is not enough'. I returned again and again during the discussion to the possibility of compromise on a formula such as that mentioned above in an attempt to find some loophole or hint in his replies that such a possibility exists. I found none. For one now to believe that a compromise is possible on any formula short of the War-dha resolution, he must also subscribe to one of the two following possibilities: (a) Nehru was lying to me last night. I dismiss this possibility because if a compromise is possible Nehru would hope to obtain assistance from United States in bringing it about to advantage of Indian people. For him categorically to deny possibility of such a compromise,

knowing full well that we would communicate such denials to Washington and thus possibly rule out American assistance, seems to me untenable; or (b) he was unwilling to talk to me in presence of others as frankly as he otherwise might have done. I propose to put this possibility to test tomorrow morning when Nehru returns to Delhi. I expect to see him privately and, remote as I now think the chances are, I shall not be wholly convinced that the Congress has shut its doors to compromise until Nehru persists in his intransigent attitude if in private.

Having disposed of question of compromise, I then asked Nehru what chance he thought there was for British acceptance of Congress demand. He replied 'very little at present but perhaps later they will recognize desirability of it'. I interpret that to mean that, Japanese infiltration into eastern sections of India, followed by breakdown of civil administration, passive acceptance of and even cooperation with Japanese by Indian population in those areas, may convince British that Congress demand must be met in order to imbue civilian population with spirit of resistance and prevent spread of pro-Japanese feeling, thus avoiding Burma experience. I inquired why, if he did not expect Congress demand to be met, he felt it necessary, while repeatedly professing in resolution disinclination to interfere with war effort, to launch a movement which must inevitably hinder that effort. He said that he had been watching the growth of a spirit of passivity and bitter anti-British feeling among Indian people for several months; that he was firmly convinced this spirit likely to develop rapidly into pro-Japanese feeling, not from any love of Japanese but because of intense hatred to British; that he as a patriot refused to stand idly by and watch this development without making an effort, remote though its chances of success were, to supply the only antidote (Indian freedom); and that nothing could be more repugnant to him than to see his country become another Burma. He added that any interference with war effort would be as brief as movement itself would be short, thus implying that he expects government to jail important Congress leaders and ban Congress organization.

Nehru declared that under Wardha resolution Viceroy would be expected to depart immediately. I asked who would assume British obligations to Indian states. He replied that government of free India would undertake these obligations, thus subscribing to a unilateral theory of transference of treaty rights and duties quite unknown, so far as I am aware, to international practice. He added that while the states would be invited to accede to the government of free India, no immediate attempt would be made to force them to do so. He claimed that the fire of freedom which would spread through India would so imbue peoples of most Indian states with like feeling that their rulers would be

forced to come into the union. He explained that resolution does not contemplate immediate removal of all British officials but would at first only involve removal of a comparatively few 'useless individuals' at the top. The remainder would be permitted to remain, if they so desired, until arrangements could be made, by process of negotiation with British, for their disposition. They could not, however, expect to receive 'the fat salaries' to which they have been accustomed at the expense of the Indian people. The Governors of the provinces would, like the Viceroy, have to go at once as there would be no place for them in free India. The slow removal of lower British officials would avoid the confusion and delay to war effort which might otherwise be caused by complete independence now.

I inquired whether Nehru was absolutely convinced that Jinnah and Congress could come to terms immediately upon withdrawal of British power. His answer was a categorical affirmative. He repeated the well-known argument that there can be no settlement between League and Congress as long as British are here to keep them apart and outbid either party. He claimed that once full responsibility is entrusted to Indian leaders, with no third party from whom they may expect bargains, they will reach an honourable settlement at once. Nehru stated that Congress and League were on verge of a settlement just prior to visit of Cripps. But Cripps's proposal showed that British were prepared to grant Pakistan so that, from Jinnah's point of view, further negotiation with Congress was without purpose.

While supplying answers to many questions, the interview, due to lack of time and the necessity of covering such a wide field, left others untouched. In addition, some of the replies could not be pursued for the purpose of developing their full implications. I hope to fill in at least some of these gaps when I see Nehru again tomorrow morning.

17 July 1942

I saw Nehru this morning for just over one hour. The main purpose of this interview was to ascertain, if I could, that there was really no basis of negotiation with the British Government under the Wardha resolution. After answering series of questions Nehru finally stated that negotiations could be opened along the following lines. Let the British Government make a declaration acknowledging the independence of India here and now and requesting all the various parties in India to get

together and form a provisional government. This provisional government would for practical reasons involve only the immediate displacement of high British officials at the top. The provisional government after its formation would then negotiate with the British Government in the best of goodwill as to how together they could best organise and promote the war effort to the greatest possible extent. Nehru emphasized that the proposed declaration should be brief and in general terms suggested above in order that the chances of its success should not be jeopardized by details at the very beginning. He added that the declaration should not concern itself with communal questions as these by their very nature must of necessity be settled by the Indian leaders themselves. I enquired whether he thought such a declaration would be acceptable to Jinnah. He replied that Jinnah's interests were fully protected in the proposed declaration in as much as if the Indian leaders themselves failed to form a provisional government to take over from the British that would be an end of the matter. Accordingly if Jinnah were not satisfied he could decline to join such a government and the British would then be fully justified in saying that the Indian leaders themselves could not agree on a government to displace the present one. Nehru informed me in the most earnest and categorical manner imaginable that the Congress could come to terms with Jinnah within two days after the promulgation of the declaration mentioned above provided the British Government kept hands off.

It went without saying, Nehru said, that the United Nations would receive the very fullest cooperation from the provisional government and that the Commander-in-Chief would be left full discretion as to military strategy and dispositions. The Commander-in-Chief, according to Nehru, would be surprised at the complete support he would receive. From my two recent interviews with Nehru it would appear, if he is to be believed, that the foregoing is the minimum formula under which a settlement with the Congress can be effected and civil disobedience movement thwarted.

I reopened the question of the anticipated briefness of the movement and learned that I was wrong in my inference that Nehru foresaw a brief movement because of his expectation that the Congress leaders be jailed immediately. He said that the movement would go on, no matter how many leaders were placed under arrest. He pointed out that it would only take a short time to tell whether the movement was meeting with success. If events showed that it was not attracting sufficient popular support it would of course be abandoned; if it attracted mass support but did not accomplish its purpose, it would likewise be abandoned. He added that in case of Japanese invasion of India or

immediate threat of invasion before or during movement it would of course be necessary for the Congress to reconsider its position. He considers the movement has a fair chance of success.

I then questioned him as to the form the movement would take. He said that he could not say as this was entirely up to Gandhi and that the movement might and probably would take different forms as it progressed depending upon developments and British repressive measures. He pointed out, however, that since the movement would be based upon non-recognition of British authority in India it would probably take the form of ignoring all British laws and orders.

He confirmed that Gandhi, after meeting of All India Congress Committee, would probably follow his practice of forwarding resolution to Viceroy for submission to London. It was also quite likely he said that further time would be consumed by waiting for provincial Congress committees to confirm action of All India Congress Committee.

25. Call for Free India¹

Many times you have assembled here and I too have had many opportunities of addressing you here. But today I am faced with a difficulty. You must be acquainted with the latest statements of Mahatmaji.² The events of today, taking place in the world and in India, are really very important. You must have heard of them and read about them in the newspapers and you know where you stand. We in India are passing through a stormy period. I do not know, and nobody can know, its

1. Speech in Delhi, 18 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 19 July 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1942, File No. 4/1/42, National Archives of India.

2. In the *Harijan* of 12 July 1942, Mahatma Gandhi called upon the Muslims, including those who believed in Pakistan, to join his movement to displace the British power. He denied that he was a modern Nero and said, "I am lighting my own funeral pyre to end the agony." On 14 July 1942, he asserted that the British should immediately declare India free, and that he wanted independence not on paper but in action. He called his movement an "open rebellion", a mass movement on the widest scale and of nonviolent character which should be "as short and swift as possible."

consequences. A gigantic war is going on which is approaching India day by day. The problems which have become difficult are those which concern us primarily and which are our national problems. These problems we can face only when we make ourselves strong.

You are aware of the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Wardha.³ You must have also read the articles written earlier by Mahatma Gandhi in the *Harijan* and realised which way the wind is blowing. The resolution passed by the Working Committee is not decisive, but evidently it is a vital decision. The final decision will be taken by the All India Congress Committee which will meet in a week or two at Bombay.

What is going to happen afterwards, I cannot say. Everything depends on the decision to be taken by the A.I.C.C. Whatever be this decision, we can only guess that it would be important and final.

At Wardha, we carefully measured the pros and cons of the question as the issues involved affected millions of people in this country.

The Indian National Congress owes its strength to the fact that, despite its shortcomings, it has always represented the spirit of rebellion in India against foreign domination.

The character of war has radically changed, and the fate of India can no longer be decided as in the past by a single defeat at Panipat. Wars can only be carried on in the modern world with the sanction of the people. We want to create a spirit in India which will make people fight for every inch of ground and not be dismayed by a single military defeat. You are all aware of the glorious fight which the people of China are carrying on for the last five years. I deprecate the policy of inaction which will bring about our spiritual degradation. To surrender without a fight kills a country's soul.

The Congress has always strived to solve the problem of communal question but the British Government obstructed its solution in their own interest. Sir Stafford Cripps also tried to introduce an apple of discord.

I am confident that there will be no great difficulty in establishing a government representing Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other communities.

As regards the coming struggle it is no longer a question of going to jail. Nobody will deliberately go to jail. It will be a terrible ordeal for the Congress this time. It may perish in the struggle but a free India will emerge out of its ashes. I am not dismayed at such a prospect.

Many people are saying that Congress leaders are only working for themselves or for their party and are trying to establish their dictatorship over the people of India and it is alleged that the Congress is a

3. See *ante*, pp. 386-397.

communal organisation.⁴ Such a thing, to my mind, is unthinkable in the present world. The Congress believes in the willing cooperation of all sections of the people.

It is difficult to predict the future. War may come to India but our struggle cannot end till India is free. Whatever is in my mind is also in yours. The present War will not lead the countries to real freedom. I do not wish victory for Japan or Hitler lest the world should be enslaved. I am however surprised at the British attitude which is so boastful of her love for freedom. There is no change in her attitude despite her defeats in the battlefields. After the Working Committee resolution it has again started threatening and advising us.⁵ I am fed up with their sick advice from Whitehall and the threats and intimidations against us. Our only reply to their threats is to oppose them.

People are clamouring for action since long. Hitler devastated the countries conquered by him and their plight has become all the more miserable after the German occupation. After two hundred years of sufferings and hardships it is not proper to postpone the struggle for freedom whatever be the circumstances. This people tend to forget. Also, the struggle for India's freedom is a fight for the freedom of the world.

I see two things. First, the attitude of the British Government within its Empire. Secondly, its refusal to grant Dominion Status to Burma even after the War. Within a few months Burma had changed hands and had been snatched away from the British. The Governor of Burma talks funny things⁶ without being ashamed of them at all. The behaviour of the British Government and its officers in Burma was scarcely

4. On 14 July 1942, Jinnah stated that the Congress by rejecting Rajagopalachari's resolution on Pakistan "declared itself definitely and emphatically for *Akhand Hindustan*. What remains of the difference between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Congress?" Mahatma Gandhi's call for civil disobedience was to establish a Hindu Raj, a Congress Raj, by embarrassing the British at the time of crisis. Earlier, on 19 June 1942, he had charged the Congress with bad faith in putting forward claims to represent Muslim interests as well as those of Hindus.
5. The Viceroy's Executive Council on 15 July 1942 stated that the Congress demand ignored the interests and demands of the Muslims and was unreasonable at a time of war crisis. It threatened action against those attempting to break law and order or interfere with the war effort. The British Government clarified on 17 July 1942 that there could be no change in their policy towards India, and asserted that the Working Committee's resolution was only a call to chaos and invitation to the Japanese.
6. Sir Reginald Hugh Dorman-Smith (b. 1899), who was appointed Governor of Burma in 1941, declared that there was no considerable disloyalty among the Burmans. The Japanese were unable to get a single Burman of any prestige to join their side and there was not a single Burman quisling.

creditable. The British officers of Burma are now being appointed as high officials in Delhi. They had given ample proof of their ability in Burma and now opportunities are being afforded to them to show their worth in India. Is it not strange? Leave aside the question of sympathy with India. Had they only exercised a little commonsense and prudence, the situation would have been entirely different. But they are so conservative that they have not changed their mentality in spite of a change the world over. They are aware of what happened in Malaya and Burma, and they must be imagining what would happen if their rule in India also came to an end. But apparently they do not seem to be disturbed. They tread the same old beaten track, but we can no longer allow our country to be on the path of destruction as witnessed in Burma and Malaya. Mahatma Gandhi has written a number of strongly worded articles within the last two months, and has asked the British to quit India at once. It is a bitter pill for them to swallow. But Mahatma Gandhi agreed to let the British and American armies remain on the Indian frontiers to fight the Japanese on the condition that India is declared independent and armies fight on behalf of a free India against the enemy.

Mahatma Gandhi whose mission of life is to free India has now reached the age of seventy-three. He has fought several times the fight of freedom. He is old now although full of courage. He wants to fulfil the mission of his life.⁷

We want to check the dangerous turn which the anti-British feeling in India is taking. In the opinion of Gandhiji the only method to do it is to create a spirit of non-submission against foreign domination of Britain or Japan. We do not want to go from the frying pan into the fire.

There has been some criticism of the Working Committee's resolution in the American press but we will strain every nerve to explain our resolution and its implications. It is my strong belief that the stand which the Congress has taken is in the interest of the Allies. I have every hope that those friends of ours who feel bewildered at our resolution will before long correctly appreciate our position and sympathize with us. I do not want to condemn such misinformed critics.

India is now determined to take a dip in this worldwide storm. In a few weeks we will have a mass movement. This will be our final struggle and we must be prepared to face the worst.

7. Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Harijan* of 19 July 1942: "I am struggling to give myself rest. But sometimes duty, may be passion or infatuation, forbids it. But the relevant fact is that so long as the reason is unimpaired, physical illness is no bar to the conduct of nonviolent struggle."

26. Plunge into the Tempestuous Wave¹

The only course open to the country is to fight British imperialism in order to increase India's resisting power to fight any fascist aggression. Indians, so long as they are under the British Government, cannot fight an aggressor. Therefore, the only course for them is to attain independence and in attaining it they should develop their resisting power so that they might fight the Japanese and German aggressors to one man and keep their independence intact. The people should plunge into the tempestuous wave of fight and better get drowned than be inactive.

After the British withdrawal, a national government on the basis of agreement between different parties would be established which would carry on the War in alliance, if they so wished, with the English and the Americans. If India is made independent, there would arise tremendous forces which would change the whole face of the War in favour of the Allies.

The Congress has always stood for freedom and democracy and in consonance with this policy it has full sympathy with democratic Spain, China and other wronged countries and people.

England gave a long rope to Germany and Japan by yielding to the German and Japanese dictators, hoping that the Germans might work against the possibility of Russia becoming too strong, and that Japan would work against America's becoming too predominant. The Congress has all through been protesting against the British policy of saying good-bye to all their professions. Now the British are reaping the fruit of their own sowing.

Had English statesmen acted wisely at the proper time, many misfortunes would have been easily avoided. Had they agreed to the Congress demands, there would have been a great enthusiasm and the country would have played a splendid part in the prosecution of the War.

The country is in a difficult situation. We do not want the Japanese, and we would fight and defeat them. But we are helpless as we cannot fight as chattels under the present bureaucratic government and also because of the difference in methods. Without a truly national government it is impossible to create the right sort of enthusiasm necessary in a war.

1. Speech at Meerut, 19 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 20 July 1942.

27. Cable to V.K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
21-7-1942

Just returned and received your Wardha and Allahabad cables today. Working Committee decision means recognition of complete independence for India and their consequential negotiations for transfer of power to provisional government and effective carrying on war as allies to resist aggression and help China and Russia. Confident formation of composite provisional government with principal parties commanding widest national support, provided there is no British interference. Congress is anxious to do its utmost against Japanese aggression to help China. Owing to British policy, public sentiment dangerously flowing in contrary direction. Only way to check this is to convert this to present independence leading to alliance for common cause, turning all our national energy towards defence of free India. British and American armies are remaining in India as allies. No other way possible. In case of British refusal to acknowledge Indian independence intense movement on widest scale seems inevitable.

Proposed delegation² to Russia has my full approval but I am personally unable leave country now. Repeated requests to Government of India for facilities of delegation remain unanswered. Possibly developing situation nationally, internationally may create further difficulties. Would welcome your joining delegation. Gandhiji quite well though weak.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The U.P. Committee of the Friends of the Soviet Union, at a meeting in Allahabad on 4 May 1942, had decided to send a goodwill mission to the Soviet Union. Krishna Menon, in his two cables of 13 July 1942, had asked Jawaharlal whether the proposed delegation had his approval and whether he (Menon) should make arrangement for his (Jawaharlal's) visit as a member of the delegation.

28. Cable to V K. Krishna Menon¹

Allahabad
23-7-1942

Your cable eighteenth.² Sent you message 170 words twentyfirst. Appreciate fully the extreme gravity situation of Russia and China and necessity for second front. Earnestly desire to give every help but the very gravity of the situation demands complete reversal of policy in India to enable us to give people's enthusiastic support which is impossible under present conditions. Otherwise progressive deterioration and desperation. I am convinced with acknowledgement of independence of India now, avenue then can be opened for negotiations of mutual arrangements and transfer of power and defence and active resistance on widest scale. Present demand essentially based on desire to offer effective resistance to Japan to prevent repetition of Burma tragedy and help China and Russia in this grave crisis. No doubt about free India's role in War. Allowing matters to drift is dangerous from every viewpoint. British policy statements have infuriated people and has closed doors of giving effective help. Submission to it means despairing submission to others also. Still possible to change this completely by bold step in larger interest of world freedom. Following closely world developments. Would like you to appreciate Indian conditions ignoring which is disastrous.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. In his cable of 18 July 1942, Krishna Menon expressed deep concern over the "gravest" situation since the outbreak of the War, called upon Jawaharlal to stand firm as an anti-fascist champion and declared that any direct action against the British would weaken the front against the Axis and endanger India and her friends.

29. Instructions to Congress Workers¹

1. Congressmen should be made to realise that the proposed movement is likely to be of a far intenser and more widespread character than any of the previous civil disobedience movements. Gandhiji has made this clear and he envisages it as something relatively short but very intense. No such intense movement can be carried on at the same high pitch

1. Confidential note prepared by Jawaharlal as President of the U.P.P.C.C., Allahabad, 24 July 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

for very long. Hence the first two or three months are the most important.

2. It should be equally realised that the reaction on the part of the government will also be far more intense and brutal than in the past. Everything that we have known in 1930-1932 will be repeated and much more. So we must be mentally and otherwise prepared for this, in so far as we can be.

3. The movement may be precipitated by government action, mass arrests, etc. Therefore we have not a day to lose and must keep in readiness for whatever may happen and not be taken aback by it.

4. In order to bring out the different character of the new movement, Gandhiji has stated that it is not his purpose to fill the jails. Jail-going has become too common and stale. Of course, government may arrest our people in large numbers and put them in prison. But formal satyagraha for jail will not be our method.

5. All this indicates that the conflict will be severe. The range of it is likely to extend to all sections of the people. There will be no limitations or restrictions and all will be invited to join in their different capacities. The exact form this may take will be determined by Gandhiji later, and will also necessarily depend on government action against Congress. But it has already been made clear by Gandhiji that he contemplates non-payment of taxes, hartals and strikes, (resignations from government service), salt manufacture, refusal to obey government orders &c &c.

6. We must await instructions from him and the A.I.C.C. before taking any step. There must be discipline in our ranks and we must not precipitate matters. But, at the same time, we must prepare our workers immediately for the times to come. All the initial steps, organisational and other, should be taken and completed *before* the A.I.C.C. meets in Bombay.

7. In the nature of things, it will be difficult to have much, if any, central control, all India or provincial. Instructions will of course be issued from time to time. But essentially work will have to be decentralised and carried on through local initiative. Within the broad limits of the instructions issued at the beginning by the Working Committee, the A.I.C.C. and Gandhiji, each local centre and every individual must continue to function, even though further instructions do not reach it or him. But always it must be remembered that nonviolence has to be the basic feature of all activities.

8. With this general picture in mind and with the full realisation that the movement is not going to be just a jail-filling one but will demand the highest sacrifice and courage, we must proceed to tune up our workers

and organisations, so that we may be able to respond effectively to the call whenever it comes. Realising also that the time is very short and the call may come unawares or be precipitated by government action.

9. The meetings to be held all over the U.P. on August 1st are not part of the satyagraha movement and should not be treated as such. They are meant to awaken the popular mind to the critical position today and to prepare it for the proposed movement. It is not desirable to invite conflict on that day or unnecessary arrests. If any such meeting is prohibited, there should be no disobedience of the order, but private meetings should be organised to pass the resolution which has been recommended. It is further suggested that processions be not taken out that day. Speeches almost inevitably leading to arrest should be avoided and there should not be too many speeches.

10. Congress offices and committees should forthwith make their internal arrangements for the future. The *sanchalak* will be chiefly responsible. Where there are separate city and district *sanchalaks*, they should confer together in order to evolve a joint plan of action.

11. Proper arrangements should be made in each district for the maintenance of communications both within the district and with such provincial centres as may be functioning and the broadcasting of news. *Sanchalaks* are authorised to raise funds for their work.

12. All local disputes must forthwith be ended. Complaints over petty matters should not be sent to the P.C.C. Even those against whom disciplinary action has been taken are free to join the movement.

13. It is likely that the first step in the movement proper will be an all-India hartal, something of the nature of the famous hartal of April 6, 1919. This will be fixed either by the A.I.C.C. or by Gandhiji. Every effort must be made to make this hartal a success in bazaars, rural areas, towns, factories, etc. This must be done despite official opposition. It is important that this hartal be made a success.

14. In view of suppression of news by the censors or government officials, and difficulties in sending communications, workers should remain wide awake to find out what is happening. In particular, they should read *Harijan* to understand the nature of the movement, and they should act in accordance with the directions that reach them.

15. In the course of the movement there should not be any destruction of property, such as trees, etc. (which were cut down previously as part of forest satyagraha²).

2. The forest satyagraha was inaugurated on 10 July 1930 at Pusad near Yeotmal when M.S. Aney with some volunteers tried to cut wood in the reserved forests. It soon spread throughout the then Central Provinces and Berar region where many persons defied the forest laws and courted arrest.

16. Fines should not be paid and no facilities should be given to the police to realise them by attacking property, etc.

17. In districts there should be several centres of activity. Usually it will be found convenient to have centres in each tahsil area.

18. All workers must realise that our movement can only be carried on on the basis of self-sufficiency in each area. There must be no dependence on other areas, though every effort should be made to maintain contacts with them. In the ultimate analysis every worker may have to be a self-sufficient entity carrying on the programme to the best of his ability.

19. While jail-going is not going to be our main programme, on no account must arrest or jail be avoided. Such avoidance has a very bad effect on mass psychology. We must always face the opponent; not run away.

20. The time factor must always be borne in mind and the urgent demands of the situation. The P.C.C. office is taking immediate organisational and other steps to help and maintain contacts with districts and local areas. Local workers must do likewise so that everything should be in readiness before the A.I.C.C. meets.

30. Freedom Will Create Enthusiasm¹

We do not want to be passive spectators of disaster in India or China. The War concerns us more intimately than it can concern anyone else. Therefore, it becomes essential to create conditions here now which can change the character of the War, specially in India, and give a tremendous additional strength to the Allied cause. That can only be done by a complete change in India by recognizing and giving effect to independence and then by cooperation as allies between India and the United Nations in the fight against aggression. It is perfectly clear that a free India will defend itself by armed forces and in every other way possible. But all this is dependent upon freedom in the present and the vital enthusiasm that it would create among the masses.

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 26 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 28 July 1942.

I am not prepared to say anything in reply to the attack made by the *Daily Herald*² on the Congress excepting that this very attack justified completely, if a justification was needed, the attitude of the Congress. It is clear that there is nothing in common between the British Labour Party and the people of India, who desire not only to free India but also the world and who do not propose to function as underlings of the British Empire.

The question of guarantee for future independence ignores the real point at issue. While we desire independence, this by itself is not the chief issue at present. The real issue is how to meet the present situation, how to repel aggression on India and how to help China and Russia and the common cause of the Allies. It is manifest that it is not being done and will not be done effectively under the present conditions. To drift, as we have drifted so long, is to forget what happened in Burma and elsewhere and invite disaster.

2. The *Daily Herald* of 21 July 1942 commented editorially: "If you persist in demands which are at this moment impossible to grant, you will cripple your cause and humble the influence of us who are your proud and faithful advocates. You will do worse, you will convey to the world the impression that India's leaders are incapable of distinguishing between the ideal of the United Nations and the petty standards of nationalism; that you rate political strategy higher than the prospect of liberty, equality and fraternity with the progressive forces of the earth".

31. Reply to Stafford Cripps¹

I have refrained from saying anything about the various comments and criticisms made in India² and outside of the Working Committee's

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 27 July 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 28 July 1942, and J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Cowasji Jehangir stated that the Congress Working Committee resolution made "confusion worse confounded". Chimanlal Setalvad attacked those responsible for the resolution as "practising colossal self-deception". Feroze Khan Noon thought that the Congress stand was to invite fascist dictatorship. M.N. Roy, the National Liberal Federation and the Communist Party attacked the resolution as being irresponsible at a time of crisis. The resolution was also attacked by Jinnah and Ambedkar. While *The Hindu*, the *Indian Express*, *The Free Press Journal*, the *Hindusthan Standard* and the *National Herald* welcomed the resolution, *The Madras Mail*, *The Times of India* and *The Pioneer* called it "perverse", "highly unreasonable", "dangerous" and "impeding the war effort to maximum possible extent."

resolution. Most of these criticisms come from people who have developed a habit of criticising us. British³ and American criticisms⁴ have proceeded either on a complete misunderstanding of that resolution or on a desire to pervert it. The resolution is clear enough and if people refuse to understand it for what it is, this simply shows that they do not want to understand. It is sad that at this extreme crisis responsible people should shut their eyes to hard facts and should deliberately ignore reality. That reality will not cease to be because of this attitude.

Sir Stafford Cripps's recent broadcast to America⁵ has, however, compelled me to say a few words. This broadcast is so full of misrepresentations of the Congress attitude that I am amazed at it. Like a clever lawyer Sir Stafford has picked out phrases from Mahatma Gandhi's statements without reference to their context and tried to prove the British imperialist case. This is no time for lawyer's quibbling and no statesman who shoulders responsibility can afford to do this. Sir Stafford says that American and British policy is to defend India, but Mr. Gandhi and the Congress have other views. If there is one consideration which has been paramount before the Congress leaders it is that of the defence of India. We have long struggled for independence but we might well have postponed that issue for yet a while. But we could not postpone the issue of Indian defence. It was our conviction that effective defence of India could only be undertaken by a free India that made us insist on the ending of British rule today. We have seen enough of the capacity of the British Government both for defence as well as for protection and civil government in India to realise that this is a broken reed to rely upon. We dare not imperil our safety, our defence, our present and future, by reliance upon this broken reed. Therefore it has become incumbent to replace this by a government of free India relying upon the goodwill and stout arms of our men to

3. Maurice Webb in the *Daily Herald* testified that British authorities were not impressed by the new challenge. *Time and Tide* wrote that against the background of world events the Congress proceedings "seem like acting sleep-walkers in some unreal dream." The *New Statesman* called it petty politics and expressed inability to analyse the meaning of the resolution.
4. The *Baltimore Sun* feared that mass movement would encourage the Nazis and the Japanese. The *Washington Post* could not make much sense out of Mahatma Gandhi's stand; *The New York Times* appreciated Mahatma Gandhi's preachings and teachings but attacked his present stand as inviting more harm to his people "than Chenghiz Khan."
5. On 26 July 1942, he stated, "we cannot allow the actions of a visionary, however distinguished in his fight for freedom in the past, to thwart the United Nations' drive for victory in the East."

defend India, to help China and Russia and the larger world cause of freedom.

Sir Stafford talks lightly of anarchy and chaos. He should know that anarchy and chaos are likely to be the consequences of the policy that he and his government are pursuing. The right way to prevent their development is for British rule to cease to be and for a provisional government of free India representing the major groups and parties in the country to take its place. The right way to do this is for Great Britain not to talk to us in offensive and patronising language, but to approach us in all humility with repentance for all the evils she has done to India and is still doing to her. Sir Stafford talks about War and about danger to India. We are more concerned with that danger than he can be, for we shall suffer most by it. If War comes to India it will be the people of India who will fight and die in defence of their land and their homes. It will be the people of India also, when they are in a position to do so, who will pour out their help to China and the right cause, far more than England has done in spite of her recent professions.

The situation between England and India is bad enough in all conscience. And yet Sir Stafford must need go out of his way to make it far worse and must constitute himself as the new champion of the Muslims and the depressed classes and others. I know my Muslim countrymen a little better than Sir Stafford does and I know that what he says about them is a calumny for vast numbers of them are devoted to the cause of India's independence.

Sir Stafford has also on various occasions brought out nonviolence as an insuperable barrier to prevent freedom in India. If there has been anything clearly and definitely stated on our behalf, it is this: that free India will defend the country in every way, through armed forces and by all means. The question of nonviolence in this connection has not arisen. Indeed the question of any adverse effect on the War cannot arise because the whole object is to make India stronger for defence. It is absurd then to talk about weakening India's defence. The simple issue is the complete recognition of India's independence now, and then immediately steps to be taken to give effect to it, and to take concrete measures for the more effective defence of India in cooperation with our allies.

It is sad beyond measure that a man like Sir Stafford Cripps should allow himself to become the Devil's advocate. He has thus injured Indo-British relations more than any other Englishman could have done.

It is not in this way that India is going to be won. The only possible result of this attitude is to drive the people of India to desperate

*measures so that thereby at least they might save their souls and their country from degradation.**

* This paragraph was not printed in the newspapers.

32. To Sampurnanand¹

Allahabad

28.7.42

My dear Sampurnanand,

I have done you the favour of reading your letter² and I am now doing you the greater favour of replying to it. The reply is going to be brief because it is not easy to consider the questions you have raised without writing at great length.

Every aspect of the question that you have mentioned has troubled me and made me think furiously during the past two months or to be more exact nine weeks. I have been worried and distracted beyond measure. Yet gradually I have come to the conclusion that there is no other way out. I am convinced that passivity is fatal now. Our soldiers will largely surrender to the Japanese, our people will submit to them. There is only one chance of changing this and that is by some action now. The risk is there. I hate anarchy and chaos but somehow in my bones I feel some terrible shake-up is necessary for our country. Otherwise we shall get more and more entangled in communal and other problems, people will get thoroughly disillusioned and will merely drift to disaster. How we should do this and what steps we should take is another matter. If there was a real approach from U.S.A. and China we should certainly consider it. But so far there is none. Meanwhile Cripps talks poisonously. What is one to do with this crowd?

Do come to Bombay. It is no good for any of us to sulk or keep away. We must help each other as we will have to face the consequences. So you must come. I should like to meet you there before the A.I.C.C. Come early. My address there: Sakina Mansion, Carmichael Road, Bombay.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Sampurnanand Papers, National Archives of India.

2. In his letter of 27 July, Sampurnanand had doubted the wisdom of launching a movement. He had accused the leadership of mishandling matters and thought that a movement at this juncture would make the situation worse confounded.

33. The Demand to 'Quit India'¹

A distinction should be drawn between the aggressive nationalism of independent countries like Germany or Italy and the nationalism of a subject country like India. The positive side of the latter nationalism would be demand for independence and the negative side would be displacing the ruling power. Many people express surprise at the 'Quit India' or withdrawal demand, but the inevitable consequence of the demand for independence is withdrawal of the British Government.

We do not wish to take advantage of the perils of Britain, Russia and China nor do we want the Axis powers to win. We mean to stop the Japanese and help China and the wider cause of democracy and freedom, but the nature of the danger is such now, not only for us but also for China which needs our help, that we want to meet it by converting the War into a people's war, as China has done. The preparation of the Government of India is entirely inadequate. We want to build up the national will to resistance.

We want to tackle the present situation ourselves even if we have to take risks in doing so. We want to save ourselves from the immediate peril and not take advantage of the situation in order to gain our independence. But if we remain passive, we allow the popular will against the British Government to be broken and that will break the popular will to resistance. We want to gamble with fate—if one chooses to call it so—and we will do it bravely.

The movement is not going to be a long-drawn-out affair, but it would be short and swift. I do not know exactly because this depends on psychological factors. Ours is not an armed force. Our struggle depends upon the psychological reactions of the millions of Indians.

Question: What will be the step that Congress would take after the A.I.C.C. meets to launch the movement?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The movement can begin by what we do and can be accelerated by what the government does. Gandhiji in his *Harijan*

1. Address to the Allahabad Journalists Association, Allahabad, 31 July 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 1 August 1942; also from *The Hindu*, 2 August 1942.

has indicated the steps² and the first step may be within a fortnight after the A.I.C.C. meeting. That might be a preparatory step, unless the government took such action as might accelerate it.

Q: What are your views regarding Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's proposal for a round table conference?³

JN: Without the recognition of our basic standpoint of immediate declaration of independence any round table conference, as suggested by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, would not be acceptable to us because that would be going back to the old method which had proved a complete failure and every time a trap. The whole conception of having to sit at the feet of power is repugnant to us.

Q: Will the intervention of America or China in the present situation be acceptable to the Congress?

JN: American or Chinese intervention would be acceptable in the present situation, but only on the basis of the main question of our independence and as allies and friends.

Q: What value do you attach to the declared dissatisfaction of the Muslim League,⁴ the Hindu Mahasabha⁵ and the depressed classes⁶ to the present stand of the Congress?

2. In the 26 July 1942 issue of the *Harijan*, Mahatma Gandhi explained the plan of action. The movement would be nonviolent "but I would not hesitate to go to extreme limits, if I find that no impression is produced on the British Government or the Allied powers." It would be his "biggest movement" and would be launched one week after the A.I.C.C. session. He was ready to meet the Viceroy but cautioned that even if he was arrested the movement would continue.
3. On 26 July 1942, Sapru proposed a round table conference to discuss how best to remove the prevailing tension and to arrive at some settlement for the war period, leaving the larger question of a permanent constitution for the times of peace.
4. Jinnah called upon the Muslims on 24 July 1942 not to be a party to the Congress call for Quit India and described the Congress stand as dangerous.
5. On 18 July 1942, Savarkar criticised the tactics and policies of the Congress and said they were unacceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. On 2 August 1942, he clarified that the Hindu Mahasabha would support 'Quit India' if the Congress made a statement for India's indivisibility and integrity. In the absence of such a statement, he could not lend support to the movement.
6. Ambedkar stated on 27 July 1942 that Mahatma Gandhi's move to launch a mass movement was both irresponsible and insane. "It seems to me that Mr. Gandhi is merely trying to retrieve the prestige which he and the Congress have lost since the War started... This move may be the best way to serve the best interests of the Congress party. But it certainly is not the way to serve the country... Duty requires that those who do not believe in his movement must take steps to prevent it from taking place."

JN: It would be arrogance on my part to say that I attach no value to it. But I do not attach overmuch value to it. There can be no disagreement on the fundamental issue of India's immediate independence. As far as the provisional national government is concerned, it can be of a composite nature representing all the major groups including the Congress and the Muslim League.

There is no room for any negotiation on the question of our independence. Granted that, of course, details are always negotiable between the parties and groups concerned.

The present decision was not taken in a huff, but we came to the conclusion, following a close analysis of the current world politics and the method of the British Government in fighting the War. When Congress talks of independence, it gives the impression that it is in the nature of bargaining. Therefore, the demand for the withdrawal of British power from India has irritated the British. This demand, in fact, is inherent in the nationalist movement. We are told that the 'Quit India' demand is in the nature of blackmail, and that India should wait till the situation is clear after the War.

We have been waiting for long all these years. Congress was on the point of starting satyagraha in 1940, but at the fall of France, we desisted from starting the movement, because we did not want to embarrass Britain during her moment of peril. We wanted to face the peril ourselves as far as possible. We wanted to prevent Japanese aggression upon India and keep our spirit alive. We could not throw our weight with the British Government, because the British policy was so deep-rooted that we could do nothing about it. There was no way to function effectively and the Congress wanted India not to be a passive onlooker.

An average man in India looks to the Congress for a lead, and if the Congress fails, the result would be so much disillusionment that it might even break his spirit. So the alternative left to the Congress is to take the risk in order to raise the spirit of the people and make the whole of Europe and America think in terms of the war of freedom.

34. Struggle—Eternal Struggle¹

Struggle—eternal struggle; that is my reply to Mr. Amery² and Sir Stafford Cripps.³ The people of America and Britain are preaching unity to us, when in Europe they have not been able to settle their differences resulting in tens of thousands being slaughtered. India's national self-respect cannot be a matter of bargaining. I am galled with sorrow and anger to note that I for years wanted some settlement because I felt that Britain was in trouble but the British did not reciprocate. They have had their suffering and sorrow. I wanted my country to move forward in step with them as a free country. But what is one to make of such statements of Amery and Cripps?

My mind is quite clear that our decision is correct. I can say this with all the authority and dignity of a member of the Working Committee. My mind is at rest. I can clearly see the path before us. We can tread it fearlessly and bravely. It would be like plunging in a storm in the ocean. I will do it with confidence and I invite you to do it. The world is in a state of turmoil. The storm is approaching us and if we try to escape it, it will follow us and get at us.

I want to make it clear that there is no intention to help Japan or to injure China. If we succeed, that will release tremendous spiritual forces for the cause of freedom and democracy and will greatly increase the resistance against the Japanese and the Germans. If, on the other hand, we fail, Britain will be left to fight against Japan as best as she can.

The final decision lies with the All India Congress Committee. Probably, the A.I.C.C. would not go against the decision of the Working Committee because it is a correct decision. Any other body bigger than the A.I.C.C. of Congressmen or others would have come to the same conclusion. What the first step will be I do not know.

Students should also join the struggle. How they can do it, would depend upon circumstances. India's independence is a fundamental issue with us.

1. Speech at Allahabad on Tilak Day, 1 August 1942. From *The Hindu*, 3 August 1942; and *The Bombay Chronicle*, 4 August 1942.
2. Amery told the House of Commons on 30 July 1942, that "the British Government, while reiterating their resolve to give the fullest opportunity for the attainment by India of complete self-government, cannot but solemnly warn all those who stand and believe in the policy adumbrated by the Congress Working Committee, that the Government of India will not flinch from their duty to take every possible step to meet the situation."
3. See *ante*, p. 420.

Gandhiji's 'Quit India' slogan correctly represents our thoughts and sentiments. Passivity on our part at this moment and hour of peril would be suicidal. It will break down all our will to resistance. It will destroy and emasculate us. Our step is not merely for the love of independence but to protect ourselves, to strengthen our will to resistance, to give a fresh orientation to the War, to fight and to help China and Russia; it is an immediate and pressing necessity with us.

We will fight against Japan in every possible way, with nonviolence and with arms. By making it a people's war. By raising a people's army. By increasing production and industrialisation. By making it our primary consuming passion. By fighting like Russia and China. No price would be too big to pay to achieve our success against the aggressor.

I hope goodwill will come out of this struggle, and even if we perish, on our ashes will the foundation of freedom be laid.

35. *Suppressio Veri, Suggestio Falsi*¹

I have just seen for the first time the government's communique issuing certain documents obtained during a police raid from A.I.C.C. office.² It is astonishing to what a pass the Government of India has been reduced to when it has to adopt these discreditable and dishonourable tactics. Normally such tactics require no answer. But as there is likely to be misapprehension, I wish to clear up some matters.

It is not our custom to keep detailed minutes of Working Committee's meetings. Only final decisions are recorded. On this occasion the Assistant Secretary took brief notes unofficially apparently for his own record. These notes are very brief and disjointed and represent several days' prolonged debates during which I must have spoken on various occasions for two or three hours. Only a few sentences were taken down

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 5 August 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 August 1942.

2. In a press communique issued on 4 August 1942, the Home Department of the Government of India released a summary of the notes of the proceedings of the Congress Working Committee from 27 April to 1 May 1942. These notes were intended to show that there was difference of opinion between Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal, and also that some members in the course of their private discussions feared that Mahatma Gandhi's original resolution (see *ante*, pp. 276-285) might convey an erroneous impression regarding the Congress position. The police had raided the A.I.C.C. office on 26 May 1942.

and torn from their context. They often give a wrong impression. None of us had a chance of seeing these notes or revising them. The record is very unsatisfactory and incomplete and hence often incorrect.

In our discussions Mahatma Gandhi was not present. We had to consider every aspect of the question fully and to weigh the implications of words and phrases in the draft resolutions. If Gandhiji had been there, much of this discussion might have been avoided as he could have explained to us his attitude more fully.

Thus when the question of British withdrawal from India was considered, I pointed out that if the armed forces were suddenly withdrawn, the Japanese might well advance and invade the country without hindrance. This obvious difficulty was removed when Gandhiji later explained that British and other armed forces might remain to prevent aggression.

In regard to the statement that Gandhiji expected an Axis victory, an important qualification has been omitted. What he has repeatedly said and what I have referred to is his belief that unless Britain changes her whole policy in regard to India and her colonial possessions, she is heading for disaster. He has further stated that if a suitable change in this policy was made and the War really became one for freedom for all peoples, then victory would assuredly come to the United Nations.

The references to negotiations with Japan are also incorrect and entirely torn from their context. Gandhiji always sends notice to his adversary before coming into conflict. He would thus have called upon Japan not only to keep away from India, but to withdraw from China, etc. In any event, he was determined to resist every aggressor in India and he advised our people to do so even to the point of death. They were never to submit.

It is absurd to say that any of us envisaged any arrangement with Japan giving her right of passage, etc. What I said was that Japan would want this, but we could never agree. Our whole policy has all along been based on uttermost resistance to aggression.

36. A Struggle for Survival¹

We have been demanding freedom for many years past, and it is our birthright. If it were only that, we could afford to wait for a few months,

1. Speech at Parel, Bombay, 5 August 1942. From *The Bombay Chronicle*, 6 August 1942, and *The Hindustan Times*, 6 August 1942.

perhaps years, or more. But today, India is in imminent danger of aggression and this danger cannot be faced without full freedom.

People talk of giving us a promissory note and guarantee of future freedom. But it is not a question of freedom at all, but of our very existence. This is not a struggle for Swaraj for its own sake, but for the sake of preparing for a greater struggle for survival.

The forthcoming meeting of the A.I.C.C. is going to be the most momentous and important session during the last quarter of a century. The Working Committee has taken a decision that this country should no longer live in slavery and that a struggle for freedom should be launched. It is a question of life and death not only for the Congress but for the entire country and it would deeply affect the fortunes of the Allies as well as the Axis powers. The step the Congress will take or has decided to take will change the whole course of the history of India. It is indeed a very grave responsibility that the Congress has undertaken and I have no doubt of the response of the people of India to the call of the Congress.

It is not mere patriotic impulse that has forced the issue. It is a very delicate and far-reaching decision that the Congress has taken, and I and other members of the Working Committee spent many a sleepless night in thinking over the issue and weighing the pros and cons of the step. When fifteen intelligent persons meet there are bound to be as many different opinions. They will have to understand each other's views, and out of the welter of opinions will evolve one common policy. Needless to say the decision has been arrived at after the most careful and mature thinking. The resolution has also been released to the press so as to enable everybody concerned to give due consideration to it.

You are aware of the Government of India's communique. We were told that the government had been preparing a bombshell for us. The bombshell turned out to be nothing more than the publication of some papers 'stolen' from the Congress office.

It appears that the object of the government was to discredit and defame the Congress in America and other countries of the world. Maybe, they might succeed in that purpose, but did the government think for one moment what the reaction in India would be? The reaction would be just the opposite of what the government wanted. Anyway the Congress has more momentous issues to decide than the Government of India's propaganda.

The situation with which the Congress is confronted today is not one between Britain and India alone. If it were a case for the national freedom of India alone I would have waited. But it is not so. India's demand is linked up with the freedom of the entire human race. My

colleagues on the Working Committee and myself are worried because as a consequence of our step China and Russia will be injured. I have visited those countries, and I have many friends there. I know the cause for which they are fighting and sacrificing a great deal. The Congress is anxious to avoid doing anything which might strengthen the Axis powers because I am convinced that an Axis victory would mean the continuation of slavery in the world. But that does not mean that I am prepared to tolerate slavery of India or any other imperialism.

The concern of the Congress for the democracies of the world led us to go to incredible lengths to arrive at a settlement with Cripps. Japan was sitting at India's frontier. France had fallen and the rest of the democracies were in peril. The cumulative effect on us was that we undertook to do things which normally we would not. We became anxious to help the Allies as the Communists are now anxious to help. I am happy that the negotiations failed and we were not caught in that snare. It was fortunate that the Working Committee did not lower itself so much. If Britain had made an honest gesture for the liquidation of imperialism then the whole face of the present situation would have changed. The Congress is not prepared to work within a circumscribed limit and operate only within a ring.

The way in which the British administration is being conducted especially for the last three years has led us to disaster. If it continues in the same way, far from achieving an early victory we will court more and more misfortune.

There is no instance in history when an empire of the magnitude of the British Empire had crumbled at the first touch as in Burma and other places. Civil administration in these places failed even before the military defeat. But unfortunately the reverses and sufferings have not taught them anything.

I would rather have my arms cut off than do anything which would harm China. I am prepared to lay down my life for the freedom of China as much as for the freedom of India. But what can I do? Do you think we can do anything to help China situated as we are? I am equally determined not to allow myself to be kicked about by two imperialist powers, Britain and Japan. My greatest desire is that we should fight this War in such a way that the whole world be free. I do not desire that we should somehow secure our freedom only and preserve it. I want India to be free so that she can play her great part in advancing the cause of peace and prosperity throughout the world. We have now very rightly decided that it is much better to fight with valour and go down rather than keep quiet.

Everything pointed to only one remedy that India should be freed immediately so that she could face the aggressors whoever they might be. We have been striving for freedom for a number of years, and if it had been a question of our freedom alone I would have chosen to wait for months, perhaps years. But the issue today is different. We cannot fight, as we have been asked to do, for a freedom which we do not enjoy. The enthusiasm of the people cannot be whipped up to defend something of which they have no knowledge. Let me emphasize that this is not going to be a struggle for Swaraj for its own sake but a struggle for the sake of facing an imminent danger and for our survival, and if we keep quiet now, the ineptitude of the government will embroil us in a hopeless mess and cause great misfortune to China and Russia.

Some people have expressed surprise on my being a party to the Wardha resolution. There is nothing to be surprised about it. I wish to repudiate that I am not in favour of the "Quit India" movement. I am not only wholly in favour of it but have been actually advocating it for a number of years now. My only concern was in regard to the Allied forces in India as their withdrawal would have meant the opening of the doors to Japan. Mahatma Gandhi has accepted this view. All of us should extend complete support to Mahatma Gandhi in his new move. Gandhiji is not imposing restrictions of any kind this time. It is an invitation not only to Congressmen, but to all the men and women of India, and it is hoped that the response would soon lead us to freedom and victory.

37. Free India As An Ally¹

When we talk of free India becoming an ally of the United Nations, obviously we mean that we should be partners with them in this War. Indeed, the last meeting of the Working Committee at Wardha adopted a resolution which definitely stated that the Congress proposal for British withdrawal from India was not meant to embarrass Britain or the other Allied powers in their prosecution of the War or in any way to encourage aggression against India or to increase the pressure against China by Japan or other Axis powers. There can be no question, then, of a separate peace or arrangement by anyone in the country, leaving the Allies in the lurch.

1. Interview to the *Manchester Guardian*, Bombay, 5 August 1942. From *The Hindu*, 7 August 1942.

A free India means that Britain should completely shed her imperialism. The United Nations should also stand for ending colonial domination. Free India must work heart and soul with the United Nations to defeat all the aggressors, and bring triumph to the cause of freedom as represented by the United Nations. In view of this it would be an act of betrayal to leave the cause and part company with the United Nations by making separate and opportunist arrangements with any country. India, of course, is anxious to see complete freedom in all Asiatic countries including Burma, Malaya, the Dutch East Indies, Iran and Iraq. Japan must be compelled to vacate such countries as she has occupied, but this must not lead to other colonial powers taking possession of them.

38. Stray Notes—August 1942¹

Indonesia—Korea—Ceylon—Nepal

Zero hour of the world

Emotional reactions—debasement of moral standards.

Demoralisation—falsehood.

Danger of being swept away by passion.

Go to the people—find out what they feel or say. Not playing politics

What politics have we played at? =This not the Congress way for 22 years. Many of us would not be on this stage if the game was just a political one—Circumstances have forced us.

Spending our lives in prison=Not the action of the moment but due to deep-seated conviction and urges before which all else is secondary and immaterial. Something more than politics.

1. Notes made by Jawaharlal during the Congress Working Committee meeting on 5 August 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Hope when War came—Dashed and broken—and a campaign of misrepresentation and breaking national movement—Congress...² Britain.

Frustration and desperation and a firm anti-British sentiment—

Lesson of France—Burma &c.

Evacuees.

& how! Government of India—incompetence—corruption &c defeated—lack of will to resist except demand for freedom.

Publication of papers.

मेरे कानों में हिन्दुस्तान की आवाज़ गूँजी—

दिलों के तूफान

आर्जू—तमन्ना थी—अब भी वही ही लेकिन
सबसे बड़ी यह के यह सिलसिला ख़तम हो—चाहे
हम ख़तम हों³

Past failure—How to remedy? Not by carrying on in the old way—

We do not wish to have dominion over others—but we cannot tolerate dominion over us.

2. One word is illegible.

3. Echoed in my ears the voice of India—The storms raging in people's hearts! A yearning, an aspiration was there. And it is there, there still. But the most important of all—This chain must break, even if we break!

[Note:—Literal translation from Hindi. This does not appear to be a quotation but Jawaharlal's own thought in semi-verse style.]

World federation—(Nepal &c)
Muslim League.

Immediate peril to India—how to meet it.

Resistance to Japan or Germany—No submission whatever happens.
Real danger to us *now*—later to Britain.

Throwing our bread upon the waters.

Quit India—

जिंच होना⁴

Independence—

40 crores

I do charge the British Government with bitter hostility to the people of India, with deliberate falsity and perversion, with every attempt to disrupt India—with enmity to the Congress.

Sowing bitter seeds of hatred and now the harvest approaches.
Every fibre of my body rebels against the British Government.

British Labour Party

Change in me
Rajaji

Tagore Centenary [*sic*]. His last message—
Crisis in Civ[ilization]⁵.

4. Stalemate.

5. Tagore's last message was read out in Santiniketan on 14 April 1941 and later printed as a booklet entitled *Sabhyatar Sankat* (*Crisis in Civilization*).

Our cup is full.
Give my life for China—Russia
Prayer to the spirit of India

If our proposals accepted no chaos—no disruption &c. Cripps—No
Viceroy &c!
Only on refusal possibility of chaos.
If—Out of chaos—dancing stars of freedom

Maulana

Acid test—Does our proposal help or injure cause War?—against
aggression.

39. Quit India Resolution

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Draft for Working Committee, Bombay, 5 August 1942¹

The All India Congress Committee has given the most careful consideration to the reference made to it by the Working Committee in their resolution dated July 14, 1942, and to subsequent events, including the development of the war situation, the utterances of responsible spokesmen of the British Government and the comments and criticisms in India and abroad. The Committee approves of and endorses that resolution and is of opinion that events subsequent to it have given it further justification, and have made it clear that the immediate ending of British rule in India is an urgent necessity, both for the sake of India and for the success of the cause of the United Nations. The continuation of that rule is degrading and enfeebling India and making her progressively less capable of defending herself and of contributing to the cause of world freedom.

The Committee has viewed with dismay the deterioration of the

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Second Draft for Working Committee,² Bombay, 5 August 1942

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The Committee has viewed with

1, 2, 3, & 4. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The Quit India Resolution of the Congress was the work of Jawaharlal. We present here the first draft submitted to the Working Committee and all the later versions showing the changes after discussion in the Working Committee and the A.I.C.C.

III

*Congress Working Committee
Resolution passed at Bombay
on 5 August 1942³*

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*All India Congress Committee
Resolution passed at Bombay on
8 August 1942⁴*

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The Committee has viewed with

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situation on the Russian and Chinese fronts and conveys to the Russian and Chinese peoples its high appreciations of their heroism in defence of their freedom. This increasing peril makes it incumbent on all those who strive for freedom and who sympathise with the victims of aggression, to examine the foundations of the policies so far pursued by the Allied Nations, which have led to repeated and disastrous failure. It is not by adhering to such aims and policies and methods that failure can be converted into success, for past experience has shown that failure is inherent in them. These policies have been based not on freedom so much as on the domination of subject and colonial countries, and the continuation of the imperialist tradition and method. The possession of empire, instead of adding to the strength of the ruling power, has become a burden and a curse. India, the classic land of imperialism, has become the crux of the question, for by the freedom of India will Britain and the United Nations be judged, and the peoples of Asia and Africa be filled with hope and enthusiasm. The ending of British rule in this country is thus a vital and immediate issue on which depend the future of the War and the success of freedom and democracy. A free India will assure this success by throwing

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all her great resources in the struggle for freedom and against Nazism, fascism and imperialism. This will not only affect materially the fortunes of the War, but will bring all subject and oppressed humanity on the side of the United Nations, and give these nations, whose ally India would be, the moral and spiritual leadership of the world. India in bondage will continue to be the symbol of British imperialism and the taint of that imperialism will affect the fortunes of all the United Nations.

The peril of today, therefore, necessitates the independence of India and the ending of British domination. No future promises or guarantees can affect the present situation or meet that peril. They cannot produce the needed psychological effect on the mind of the masses. Only the glow of freedom now can release that energy and enthusiasm of millions of people which will immediately transform the nature of the War.

The A.I.C.C. therefore repeats with all emphasis the demand for the withdrawal of the British power from India. On the declaration of India's independence, a provisional government will be formed and free India will become an ally of the United Nations. This provisional government must be a composite one representative of all

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important sections of the people of India. Its primary functions must be to defend India and resist aggression with all the armed as well as the nonviolent forces at its command, together with its Allied powers, and to promote the well-being and progress of the workers in the fields and factories and elsewhere, to whom essentially all power and authority must belong. The provisional government will evolve a scheme for a constituent assembly which will prepare a constitution for the government of India acceptable to all sections of the people. This constitution must be a federal one with the largest measure of autonomy for the federating units, and, if necessary, with the residuary powers vesting in these units, subject to a strong central government, which is essential for the defence and planned development of India. The future relations between India, Great Britain and other Allied Nations will be adjusted by representatives of all these free countries conferring together for their mutual advantage and for their cooperation in the common task of resisting aggression. Freedom will enable India to resist aggression effectively with the people's united will and strength behind it.

While the A.I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in

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this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries; national armies, navies, air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and cooperate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of national and international problems.

Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the War, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the War.

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The freedom of India must be the symbol of and prelude to this freedom of all other Asiatic nations under foreign domination. Burma, Malaya, Indo-China, the Dutch Indies, Iran and Iraq must also attain their complete freedom. It must be clearly understood that such of these countries as are under Japanese control now must not subsequently be placed under the rule or control of any other colonial power. While the A.I.C.C. must primarily be concerned with the independence and defence of India in this hour of danger, the Committee is of opinion that the future peace, security and ordered progress of the world demand a World Federation of free nations, and on no other basis can the problems of the modern world be solved. Such a World Federation would ensure the freedom of its constituent nations, the prevention of aggression and exploitation by one nation over another, the protection of national minorities, the advancement of all backward areas and peoples, and the pooling of the world's resources for the common good of all. On the establishment of such a World Federation, disarmament would be practicable in all countries; national armies, navies and air forces would no longer be necessary, and a world federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

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on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

The Committee regretfully realises, however, that despite the tragic and overwhelming lessons of the War and the perils that overhang the world, the governments of few countries are yet prepared to take this inevitable step towards World Federation.

The reactions of the British Government and the interested or misguided criticisms of the foreign press also make it clear that even the obvious demand for India's independence is resisted, though this has been made essentially to meet the present peril and to enable India to defend herself and help China and Russia in their hour of need. The Committee is anxious not to embarrass in any way the defence of China or Russia, whose freedom is precious and must be preserved, or to jeopardise the defensive capacity of the United Nations. But the peril grows both to India and these nations, and inaction and submission to a foreign administration at this stage is not only degrading to India and reducing her capacity to defend herself and resist aggression, but is no answer to that growing peril and is no service to the peoples of the United Nations.

II

appeals to the United Nations*** to join together in such a Federation without waiting for the*** war. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect***, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

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*** Torn in the original source.

III

An independent India would gladly join such a World Federation and cooperate on an equal basis with other nations in the solution of international problems.

Such a Federation should be open to all nations who agree with its fundamental principles. In view of the War, however, the Federation must inevitably, to begin with, be confined to the United Nations. Such a step taken now will have a most powerful effect on the War, on the peoples of the Axis countries, and on the peace to come.

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federal defence force would keep the world peace and prevent aggression.

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The A.I.C.C. would yet again, at this last moment, in the interest of world freedom, renew this appeal to Britain and the United Nations. But the Committee feels that it is no longer justified in holding the nation back from endeavouring to assert its will against an imperialist and authoritarian government which dominates over it and prevents it from functioning in its own interest and in the interest of humanity. The Committee resolves, therefore, to sanction for the vindication of India's inalienable right to freedom and independence, the starting of a mass struggle on nonviolent lines on the widest possible scale, so that the country might utilise all the nonviolent strength it has gathered during the last twenty-two years of peaceful struggle. Such a struggle must inevitably be under the leadership of Gandhiji and the

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The Committee appeals to the people of India to face the dangers and hardships that will fall to their lot with courage and endurance, and to hold together under the leadership of Gandhiji, and carry out his instructions as disciplined soldiers of Indian freedom. They must remember that non-violence is the basis of this movement. A time may come when it may not be possible to issue instructions or for instructions to reach our people, and when no Congress committee can function. When this happens, every man and woman, who is participating in this movement must function for himself or herself within the four corners of the general instructions⁵ issued. Every Indian who desires freedom and strives for it must be his own guide urging him on along the hard road where there is no resting place and which leads ultimately to the independence and deliverance of India.

II

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5. On 9 August 1942, the Congress, giving a call for a successful fight for freedom, issued the following instructions: To observe hartal on the day leaders are arrested; volunteers to visit towns and villages explaining the Congress message; processions and meetings to be organised despite bans; *vakils* and *mukhtars* to leave their jobs and policemen, government and railway servants to resign from their services and join the struggle; students to leave their schools and colleges; people not to pay *chaukidari* or Union taxes; National Flags to be hoisted on all buildings; nothing to be done secretly but after making it known by a declaration; and to conduct the whole struggle nonviolently.

III

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40. On 'Quit India' Resolution¹

The conception of the resolution is not narrow nationalism, but it has an international background. The arguments for the resolution have already been sufficiently put before the public. I am sure the *bona fides* of the resolution have been fully understood by all friends. The resolution is in no sense a challenge to anyone. If the British Government accept the proposal it would change the positions both internal and international, for the better from every point of view. The position of China would be improved. I am convinced that whatever change might come about in India, it must be for the better. The A.I.C.C. knows that Mahatma Gandhi has agreed that the British and other foreign armed forces stationed in India may continue. This has been agreed to in order not to allow the Japanese to come in.

I am surprised how intelligent people in England and America could have misunderstood the Congress stand unless, of course, they deliberately chose to misunderstand it.² I have regretfully come to the conclusion that to some extent other governments are also following the British line of thought towards India. Today, the British Government is opposed to the Indian national movement for freedom. I am convinced that the British Government can never really think in terms of advancing the cause of the freedom of India unless, of course, the entire character of the present British Government is changed. I am not personally concerned with such a change, but I stand for dissociating myself with that government and that country. It is not for me to advise the British people what government they should have.

There is a great deal of criticism in America, too, about what India wants. We are accused, by some newspapers, that we are blackmailing.³ It is a curious charge for a people to make who themselves had

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 7 August 1942. From *The Hindu*, 9 August 1942. The resolution was moved by Jawaharlal the same day. For the text of the resolution as passed by the A.I.C.C. on 8 August 1942 see the preceding item.
2. For example, Harold Laski stated on 13 July 1942 that the Indians should raise an army to fight the Japanese and that there was no reason why they would not attain independence after the War. Also, that Gandhi's attitude was harmful not only to the Indian cause but everywhere.
3. *The Washington Post* of 4 August 1942 stated that Gandhi was "continuing consistently to play the game of a political blackmailer." *The New York Times* and the *Sun* (New York), also attacked the Congress stand as being unreasonable at a time of war crisis and hoped that good sense would prevail.

for generations carried on a struggle for freedom. If for demanding freedom we are called blackmailers then surely our understanding of the English language has been wrong. Whatever may happen in Whitehall, it is not going to stop us from working for our independence. We live for it and will die for it. I do not want to say anything at the present moment which might add to the feeling of bitterness that exists everywhere. I know that this War has produced great emotional reactions in people's minds which is one of the worst effects of the War and which makes it very difficult for the people to think straight and not to think in terms of violent hatred.

Nobody in Whitehall can think straight, I suppose. There is falsity everywhere. You listen to the radios, London, Berlin or Tokyo. One does not know what is the truth. I am prepared to make many allowances for the emotional background in England and America. I do not really mind if people there get angry. But I feel sorry for the people in England and America who have a perverted way of looking at the Indian question. They are so wrong that they will certainly land themselves in difficulty. After all, just think what would have been the course of history, particularly that of Britain, if she had taken right steps with regard to India in the last two years. If Britain had acted rightly, the entire history of the War would have been different. But in spite of perils and disasters, England has stuck to her imperialism and Empire.⁴ The fact is patent to me that the British Government and, for certain, the Government of India think the Indian National Congress to be their enemy number one. If the Government of India is going to treat the people of India like this, then we also know how to behave with them. We have seen in the last few months an unparalleled example of inefficiency and incompetency of this government. The whole system is a rotten one. I do not want to associate myself with the creaking, shaking machinery that the Government of India is. As for the so-called National War Front, there is neither the nation, nor the war, nor any front in it. All that this front is now doing is opposing the Congress. I certainly do not mind that. The whole Government of India is built that way. The only occasion when it does function effectively and efficiently is when overnight it starts rounding up large numbers of people. One of these days some such efficient functioning will reappear against Congressmen!

4. Cripps stated on 5 August 1942, "we make no threats but we must assert unequivocally our duty to India, to the great minorities and the United Nations to preserve law and order until hostilities cease and we can then give as we have presumed the fullest opportunity for the attainment of self-government by the Indian people."

It is a curious tangle that we are in. It is not going to be resolved by shouting or by the approaches of the British Government. May I, with all respect, suggest to the great people of America that they have all gone wrong in regard to India, China and the whole of Asia. Americans have looked upon India as an appendage to Britain, and Asia as the dependent of Europe and America. Some of them have thought in terms of benevolence towards these countries, but always with a taint of racial superiority. They have always considered themselves, because of their inventions during this machine age, to be infinitely better than us and also that we are a benighted backward people. But the people of Asia do not propose to be treated in that manner any longer. Asia is the mother continent of the world, and India and China constitute the real mother countries of the world. What is the good of such people, who, simply because they have some very great material achievements to their credit, have forgotten or are not learning the very essence and art of living? They have built and are building better motor cars. This is a machine age. We will also learn to build machines—better machines. Americans have forgotten the magnificent achievements of China and India. It is China and India, with the experience of ages, who have learned the art of living decently even without the material achievements considered necessary for such living.

I hate poverty. My grievance against the British is that they have made Indians miserable, poverty-stricken wrecks of humanity. We are now taking a step from which there will be no going back. If there is goodwill on the other side, then everything would be all right and the whole course of the War and the future of the world would be changed. The change would be not merely emotional but in the material sense also. But that is not to be. There might be some difficulty. It is my conviction that this resolution is the only way, the effective way, in which we can help China and Russia and I know how terrible the situation is there. Britain and America must change their whole conception of the War. It is no good looking at Asia as a side-show. Asia is the centre of the War and it is Asia that is going to determine the final result of the War. Therefore, I want to prepare today, even at some risk and peril, so that the final result of the War should be the right kind of result. We must go forward even though it involves certain perils. I should like my friends, who do not agree with this resolution or who do not try to understand it, to respect our *bona fides*. People should realise that if there is any trouble in India, it is we who would suffer. If there is internal trouble or an external invasion by Japan, it is we who would suffer. England might be distantly affected but we will have to die immediately. The problem of meeting aggression

concerns us deeply. How can I, after seeing the incompetence of the government, trust them? Their whole attitude is one of retreat. We, however, want to be valiant fighters. It is not a narrow nationalist resolution. I am proud of Indian nationalism because it is broadbased and has an international background.

The movement contemplated is not for merely achieving national ends but for achieving world freedom. The Congress is plunging into a stormy ocean and it would emerge either with a free India or go down. Unlike in the past, it is not going to be a movement for a few days, to be suspended and talked over. It is going to be a fight to the finish. The Congress has now burnt its boats and is about to embark on a desperate campaign. I can never persuade myself to work with a government which has neither vision nor intelligence. Nor would I remain a passive spectator of the great happenings that are taking place in the world. It appears to me, perhaps, I would live in eternal opposition to the Axis powers. I repudiate the suggestion that the Congress and Mahatma Gandhi are bargaining and haggling. In moments of excitement people are prone to say certain things, but this should not be dubbed as bargaining. How, by granting India's independence, would the war efforts of the United Nations be hampered or how would chaos and anarchy follow in India? The resolution does not give out even one-tenth of the real feelings of the Indians towards the British Government.

41. Offer of Cooperation¹

The debate on this resolution is over and I have also had my say. There are just a few points which I have partly said and partly not said—which I would like to say in English for the benefit of my friends who may not have followed me.

What is the resolution? You have seen and read it. It is not a threat. It is an invitation. It is an explanation. It is an offer of cooperation. It is all that. It is not a threat but still behind it there is the obvious warning that certain consequences will follow if certain events do not happen. It is an offer of cooperation but of a free India with other free peoples. There is going to be no cooperation on any

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting, Bombay, 8 August 1942. From File No. 3590/H/VI-6, Police Commissioner's Office, Maharashtra Government Records, and also from *The Hindu*, 10 August 1942.

other terms. On any other terms this resolution can only promise conflict and struggle. Let that be clear. Some of our friends abroad may think that we are acting unwisely. I do not blame them. They move in their own environment. I want them to realise what we are saying. We are in dead earnest about the course we are going to adopt. Let there be no doubt about it. You may occasionally cheer and clap but the fact is that we are on the brink of a precipice and we are in dead earnest about it. I think this resolution of ours is not only a resolution of the All India Congress Committee but it does represent—as on many other occasions our resolutions have represented—the voice of India. I would even go a step further and say that it represents the voice of the entire oppressed humanity. If, by a miracle, Britain had accepted this resolution and acted according to its demands you would have seen such a wonderful change, not only in India but all over the world. It would have changed the whole nature of the War. It would have given it a real revolutionary background which it does not bear today.

Now, remember that the essential thing about this War is that it is something infinitely more than a war; it is a World War. That is big enough; but it is bigger than that: it is a part of, and prelude to, and precursor of a vast revolution that is enveloping the whole world. This War may end or it may be carried on for some time, but no peace will be established, no equilibrium attained until this revolution runs its appointed course. Our misfortune has been that the leaders in the West did not realize the revolutionary significance of this War, or if they realized, they did not act accordingly. They are still carrying on in the same old way and think only in terms of more tanks and more aeroplanes. Probably in their position I would have done the same thing. They are not thinking of the vast surge of the elemental emotion of humanity. Unless they do this, they can never attain success. I hope they will learn, but, sometimes, I fear, that they will learn it too late.

Mr. Churchill and other Englishmen have not got over thinking in terms of the Anglo-Saxon race. In a recent speech Mr. Churchill visualised the day when the Anglo-Saxon race would march through the world in dignity and majesty.² This is not a pleasant picture to contemplate and it is a thing not going to be tolerated by Asia at any rate. Let that be clear. There is too much talk of majesty and dignity

2. Addressing the joint session of the American Congress on 26 December 1941, Churchill said: "The British and American peoples will, for their own safety and for the good of all, walk together side by side in majesty, in justice and in peace."

of the Anglo-Saxon race or the German race or the Italian race. There are other races also in the world and we have had enough of such talks. This racial superiority can no more be tolerated. We are going to cooperate with the British when we think it right to do so and when there is a right cause; but we are not going to act with them if we think that the cause is not right. At the present time, the Allied cause is only negatively right in the sense that Germany and Japan are worse. But Indian freedom would change the whole nature of the War and make it right positively. Even the people of Nazi Germany and those who are helping the Germans would feel the impact of the change. It would be a turning point of the War. But they simply talk about their own problems which have no significance for us and ask us not to do this and that and go on in their own ruts. The people in England, America and elsewhere are looking at every question from the narrow standpoint of a soldier. And it does not matter to them how other people view the Indian question. India says something which we believe—and I honestly believe—is not only in the interest of India but enormously in the interest of the Allied cause provided they accept it. They talk about blackmailing and threaten us. I can only tell them that we will not be deterred from our course by any amount of threats. On the other hand the Westerners ought to realise that at this stage threats could only make the position infinitely worse and more difficult for them. We have decided to take this course on which there is no going back. I repeat again : we shall try to remain calm. We have got big tasks ahead—a big task for our country, and a big task for the world. Whether we function as Indian National Congress or not, time may come when each individual will represent the Indian National Congress and work on his own. We must not in the excitement of the movement forget our high aims and objectives—high aims for India whose freedom we consider precious, and high aims and objectives with regard to the whole world. We are nationalists and we are proud of this fact. But we should not settle down to a narrow nationalism. We should always remember that we have to develop a right type of internationalism, but not pseudo-internationalism of the present-day world or of the League of Nations.

I beg everybody to consider this resolution in this spirit. Whether there are internal perils or external perils, after all, if the Japanese reach this country, you and I will suffer and not the people in London and Washington. You and I will have to die, face the situation, may have to face untold miseries and sufferings—we will have to face all that. People talk to us from Washington, New York and various other places. You know what Japan is. We know what subjection is and we know

it better than Americans and Englishmen. We have had it for about two hundred years. We have come to the decision that it is better to throw off the fetters into the fire and come out as a free nation than be reduced to ashes.

We are prepared to pay any price for unity except the price of independence. What obstructions have not been placed in our path which have had no relation to the real issue? I can talk and negotiate with anybody who recognises the need for democratic freedom for India, but I cannot negotiate with anyone who refuses to recognise the fundamental issue—the freedom of India. I was told during the Cripps negotiations that a certain leader insisted on behalf of Muslims that the Viceroy's power of veto should not be removed or in any way qualified. If any section wants that the British Viceroy should exercise his veto power against the decisions of his Indian cabinet, it means clearly that that section is against the freedom of India. I do not want to injure anyone's feelings especially at a time when we are about to launch a great struggle for freedom. I tried, for one whole year, to find out what the League wanted, but I was unable to understand what they wanted.³

I have not been able to find a parallel to such a situation in the history of the world. I have not come across anywhere else such a situation except in the land of Hitler. The Sudeten crisis bears similarity to the situation here. For purposes of negotiations we were not allowed to select our own representatives. We are told that we cannot send Muslims to represent the Congress. This is an insult to our great organization and to our revered President. We were prepared to stake everything consistent with our dignity and self-respect for finding a satisfactory settlement. Whenever we knocked at the doors we found them bolted, and we knocked ourselves against a wall. Are we beggars to be treated like this? Are we going to be so dishonourable as to sacrifice the mansion of Indian freedom which we want to build? Are we going to be kicked about by men who have made no sacrifice for the freedom of India and who can never think in terms of freedom at all?

3. On 7 August 1942, Jinnah stated that the "fantastic" Congress demand for the immediate establishment of a national government could not be accepted by the Muslims, as it would mean the ruling out of their demand for Pakistan, and imply their submission "to a Hindu Raj as a national sub-group." No intelligent man could believe in the sincerity of the statement by individual Congress leaders that the Government of India might be handed over to the Muslim League, but if this were done he was sure that non-Muslims would be treated well.

Our conscience is clear. We have done everything that is humanly possible for arriving at a settlement. The Muslim masses are not reactionary. We have made strenuous and sincere attempts to resolve the communal issue, but all our attempts have either been sabotaged or frustrated. The chief difficulty is that the problem is more political than communal.

INDIA AND CHINA

1. Cable to Madame Chiang Kai-shek¹

Allahabad

15-12-41

Greetings and regards to you and Generalissimo and all good wishes for China's cause which is equally ours.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. To S. K. Datta¹

Bardoli

December 24, 1941

My dear Dr. Datta,

It is a pleasure to have a few lines from you after this long interval.² It is true that my mind is very much occupied with the changes that are taking place and it seems to me that few people realise the big nature of these changes. Most of us find it difficult to get out of the mental ruts in which we have got caught.

During my stay in prison I received a letter from Chiang Kai-shek and three letters from Madame Chiang.³ They were very friendly letters indeed and I appreciated them greatly. More and more I think of India and China pulling together in future.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter of 17 December 1941, he welcomed Jawaharlal's release from prison and enquired about his correspondence with friends at Chungking.

3. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 516, 519-520.

3. Cable to Madame Chiang Kai-shek¹

Allahabad
20 January, 1942

Just received your message² on return home. I am grateful for kind enquiry and highly value friendship of Generalissimo and yourself and think often of you both and of your fine leadership in the great and common cause. I am quite well. Greetings and good wishes.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In her telegram of 12 January 1942, she sent her good wishes to Jawaharlal.

4. Goodwill Message to China¹

India and China—how thousands of pictures of past ages crowd into our minds when we think of them and their contacts and cultures. Each has played a great part in that past. Each has to play a greater part in the future. And both have to cooperate together for their own and the world's good. All good wishes to China.

1. Bombay, 5 February 1942. Message to Indo-China Goodwill Number of the *Blitz*, issued on 7 February 1942.

5. On the Visit of Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek¹

Question : Would you like to comment on your meeting with Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek?

Jawaharlal Nehru : I was very happy to meet Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. I hope to meet the Marshal again today and have a further talk.

1. Interview to the press, New Delhi, 10 February 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 February 1942. This interview took place soon after Jawaharlal met Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek on 10 February 1942.

Q : Did you discuss the Indian problem with the Marshal?

JN : Certainly, we discussed India. After all I am India. In fact, we discussed many things including India and China.

Q : Had the Marshal anything to say about Congress policy towards the war effort?

JN : You do not expect the Marshal to advise us about Congress policies and what we should do.

Q : What is the Congress policy today with regard to China?

JN : The Congress policy is this : if we could help the Chinese in their war of independence against Japan by keeping open the Burma Road, we would certainly do it. But as matters stand now, we cannot do much. The Congress attitude to the Chinese struggle for independence remains unchanged. We had sent money and a medical mission to China² as a token of our sympathy and we are prepared to do the same. Beyond that we cannot go.

Q : What do you think about China's capacity to resist?

JN : Although Chinese difficulties are increasing, I have every hope that Chinese resistance will also increase. I agree with the remark of a Chinese staff officer—"China will be completely free in six months."

Q : Will the Marshal meet Mahatma Gandhi?

JN : Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek have expressed their desire to see Mahatma Gandhi. But there is no question of Mahatma Gandhi coming to Delhi. I do not know exactly where they would meet. It may be Allahabad or somewhere in between Delhi and Calcutta.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 641.

6. Tribute to Chiang Kai-shek¹

I have come to Delhi after a long interval not for Congress or political work but to meet Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. I must

1. Speech at Gandhi Grounds, Delhi, 11 February 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 February 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

say Delhi is honoured by their visit. The Generalissimo has made a tremendous mark on the history of our times, which none can deny. During my visit to China, two and a half years ago, I had the honour of meeting the Generalissimo and his wife. The Generalissimo's personality made a deep impact on my thoughts and actions. He is not only a great general but a great leader who has successfully unified China and made his people stand firm as a rock against Japanese aggression. He is not only a great Chinese but a great Asiatic and a world figure. He is one of the topmost leaders of the world.

Madame Chiang Kai-shek is full of vitality and charm. She is a star of hope for the Chinese people who can never forget the inspiration they receive from her personality. We are sorry that our welcome to our Chinese guests cannot be more than just expressing our sentiments in our feeble words. Due to certain difficulties we have not been able to arrange a public reception.

The visit of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek has brought nearer to each other the two great nations of the world whose populations, put together, constitute about one half of the world. The Chinese have faced great trials and their struggle has great lessons for us in India. One lesson we can learn from them is, never to falter whatever be the odds against us. I hope that the Chinese leaders' visit to India will create a bond of friendship between the two great countries with two great ancient cultures, which has been one of my cherished dreams for a long time. The Chinese people have deep sympathy for the Indian cause. We will march together not only for the benefit of our own countries but for the whole world. A federation of India, China, Iraq, Iran and other countries, with its object to attain independence, will go a long way in ensuring world peace.

Some people are speculating that there might be a change in the policy of the Congress towards the War because of the visit of the Generalissimo. There is no truth in these rumours. Marshal Chiang Kai-shek has come to India as one of the leaders of Asia and the world. He is very keen to understand the Indian question. We are trying our best to make him understand our position and we ourselves want to understand and appreciate his position. We did discuss the Indian problem. The Marshal is here in India for a few days. The relationship of China and India is centuries old. It is absurd to suggest that the Marshal has come to India to interfere in our affairs.

Whatever decisions are taken in this country they are not taken hurriedly. They are the result of our experience and mature deliberations. The Working Committee has a heavy responsibility because it represents the fates of the millions of Indians. The decision taken by it

stands today. There may be difficulties in arriving at a decision. This War has engaged the whole world and no one can escape the impending revolution. We may not be able to predict what will happen tomorrow but we cannot escape the revolution.

The old world is crumbling before our eyes. Its revival is an impossibility. It is possible that our lot may become worse at least for some time in the new world as the path of revolution is a path of turmoil. There is the example of China before us. After wading through the river of blood for full five years, China has created a new world for itself. Its ancient cities were destroyed. China had to pay a heavy cost, the thought of which will make many of us shudder. But we will also have to pay the same price. Slogans will not create *inquilab* for us. Revolution will and must come. The old order has to perish for the new one to be created. We should not get panicky over it.

Our policy and line of action are the same as before. The Bardoli resolution merely reiterated our old policy. And there is no difference of opinion between Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress as newspapers make it out to be. The Congress has created a sense of discipline and intellectual integrity which has taught us to exercise our free judgment properly rather than follow the leader blindly. It is a question of millions of Indians reaching a goal and not merely of a few people achieving something for themselves. There is no reason to be surprised over the differences in the Working Committee. What is more essential is acting unitedly, and that unity in action we have been able to demonstrate. The Working Committee's decision was unanimously supported by the A.I.C.C. Those who opposed it earlier also accepted the operative part of the resolution.

We want freedom for our country and we shall not bow to any power. We want neither the Japanese nor the Germans to come, nor the British to stay. If the British had entrusted the administration of the country to the elected representatives of the people we perhaps would have prepared ourselves to meet the impending aggression. But the shortsighted policy of the British has only made us helpless.

We should be ready to face any situation without caring for the odds against us. When the time comes we should be ready to accept the responsibility for the government of the country. In order to develop the country many steps have to be undertaken. But we are aware of the negative attitude of the British Government towards industrialisation. Their policy today is not only devoid of any imagination but is also suicidal from the government's point of view.

We have also to face the danger of aerial bombing. People should not be nervous. The A.R.P. measures of the government are inadequate

and most of the officials have never experienced any bombing, though our Chinese friends experience bombing regularly. I am not against A.R.P. measures of the government but I want to emphasise that you should supplement these measures by other suitable devices and organise yourselves efficiently.

The War may lead to economic hardships. We should learn from the Chinese how to develop self-sufficiency in food, clothing and other necessities of life. The War is approaching fast but you should not get nervous. Instead, you should organise yourselves in order to perform your duties efficiently.

I am grieved to inform you of the sudden death of our oldest worker Jamnalal Bajaj. I was stunned and refused to believe the news till it was confirmed by a telegram. His death is a rude shock to all of us and it is proper that we should pass a condolence resolution.

7. To Chiang Kai-shek¹

Delhi
February 13, 1942

I have received the following telegraphic message from Mahatma Gandhi from Wardha for you and I have been asked by him to convey it to you:

It has caused me greatest grief to learn that you and your partner cannot visit Sevagram² where my wife and the little settlement were looking forward to receiving you whilst you were on Indian soil but I understand from Pandit Nehru that it could not be. I must be satisfied with being in spirit with you. All my good wishes for yourselves and your country follow you.

Mahatma Gandhi has also sent a letter for you by a special messenger³ from Wardha. I enclose this letter.

It has been a high privilege for me to meet you again and to have the advantage of discussing with you various matters of importance relating to our respective countries. Your visit and Madame Chiang's

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Chiang Kai-shek had to cancel his visit to Wardha because the British authorities were against it.

3. Ram Manohar Lohia.

to India has been a very great event for all of us, an event which may well have historic consequences. Our regret has been that we could not take full advantage of that visit, both in offering you on behalf of our National Congress organisation and our people that welcome which filled our minds and hearts, and also to enable you to see, as far as was possible within a few days, the real India.

But unfortunately circumstances have been too strong for us. It is a matter of still deeper sorrow to me that it has not been possible for our leader, Mahatma Gandhi, to meet you. No one could have explained to you our present position in India better than he could have done, and your association with him bringing knowledge and friendship between two great men of Asia and the world would have been of far-reaching consequence to our respective countries.

May I thank you for all the friendship and courtesy that you have been good enough to show to us in such abundant measure. I cannot tell you how much we treasure your friendship and that of Madame.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. India's Aid to China¹

Question: What were the reasons which compelled Mahatma Gandhi to refuse a meeting with Marshal Chiang Kai-shek?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is entirely untrue that Mahatma Gandhi refused to see the Marshal. I had a telephone conversation with Mahatma Gandhi and he told me that he had sent a telegram to the Generalissimo which he must have received after his return from Peshawar. In that telegram Mahatma Gandhi expressed his deep regret at not being able to see the Marshal during his visit. The Mahatma said that he and Kasturba had hoped to welcome him and the Madame in their little settlement at Sevagram, so that they might see its working and observe the real background of their work. If that was not possible, Gandhiji was prepared to go to any place on Indian soil to meet the Marshal and the Madame. However, because of circumstances beyond his control he was sorry that he would have to forego this opportunity.

¹ Interview to the press, New Delhi, 15 February 1942. From *The Hindustan Times* and *National Herald*, 16 February 1942.

He had sent the visitors his very best wishes for China and his Chinese friends. Mahatma Gandhi is also sending a letter to the Marshal.

Keen as the Marshal was on meeting Mahatma Gandhi, the Marshal also felt that he should not ask Mahatma Gandhi to come to see him as per Chinese custom. In a sense, the Marshal is a guest here, and Mahatma Gandhi is to that extent his host as all Indians are. According to the Chinese custom, it is for the guest to go to the host and not for the host to go to the guest. The Mahatma is also the older of the two and it is not right for the younger man to ask the elder to come and see him. Taking everything into consideration, therefore, the Marshal decided it would not be proper for him to ask the Mahatma to go anywhere at all to meet him.

To my knowledge, no official invitation was extended to Mahatma Gandhi, and no such invitation had in fact been sent to me.

Q: There are reports that the Viceroy sent invitations to meet the Marshal, to Mr. Jinnah² and many princes but not to others like Mahatma Gandhi or you. Do you want to comment?

JN: The explanation probably is that as it was clear that the Marshal would like to see the people from one camp, the official side felt that he should see people from other camps.

Q: What is the Congress policy with regard to China?

JN: It is the same as before—one of complete sympathy and support. As regards actual help, the Congress can only make a gesture of aid, as it had done when a medical unit was sent out some time ago. More, the Congress, as it is constituted, cannot do.

People in India can function for any such cause only through an Indian agency and under Indian control. The present ways open to them do not allow their collaborating with the Chinese but only with the British people in India, and thereby they can indirectly and distantly collaborate with the Chinese. There can be no direct collaboration.

Indian sympathy for China took shape long before the recent war situation developed. That was partly due to the enlightened foreign policy of the Congress which applied to all countries. India certainly felt particularly attracted towards China owing to past connections and

2. On 10 February 1942, the Viceroy sent an invitation to Jinnah to meet Chiang Kai-shek.

contacts and, maybe, a certain similarity of psychological outlooks. So far as China is concerned, a very big change took place there owing to the Sino-Japanese War when the Chinese people were driven inwards into their hinterland, as a result of which they ceased to think so much as before of their big ports, through which they had had contacts with the outer world. They were forced to think more and more of their western doors and windows and of India.

The Chinese people have been feeling more friendly towards India not only for the immediate purposes of the war but for the future generally.

The Congress reply to the Chinese appeal is, 'We shall very gladly help you but our hands are tied'.

Q: Has this view been conveyed to the Marshal and will the Marshal do anything to untie our hands?

JN: It is natural for him to hope that the deadlock would be removed. What he will convey to the British Government is more than I can say. He is the head of a state and it is difficult for him to interfere in the affairs of another state.

There is a general sympathy in China for the cause of Indian freedom. The Marshal himself had expressed his sympathy when he met me at Chungking. The Chinese authorities had in fact requested him to put them in touch with Indian industrialists for supplies and suggested that a group of industrialists should go to China. For this purpose, I called a conference of industrialists in Bombay, but owing to war-time demands in the country, they were not in a position to do much for meeting outside requirements.

Q: Do you not think that in the present War, Mahatma Gandhi's nonviolence is a passive answer for defence?

JN: The distinction between the European conception of pacifism and Mahatma Gandhi's idea is, that while the former is a negative, passive thing, Mahatma Gandhi's conception is an active, dynamic thing. Under no circumstances are we going to submit or surrender to any foreign aggression, Japanese or German. Mahatma Gandhi would like to meet aggression in his own way, but would certainly meet it, not submit to it. That is the point. Others would meet it in the more normal way, as at present people meet aggressions. That is a question which, when it arises, the Congress will have to decide. How to meet aggression or help in the War involves several issues. In so far as

actual military resistance is concerned Mahatma Gandhi prefers his own method. I cannot say what, under particular circumstances, he would advise. He is in spite of his adherence to principles adaptable and he allows others, too, to adapt themselves to particular circumstances. For instance, it is possible a position may arise in India when effective military resistance which presumably will take place beyond her frontiers proves ineffective; the question would arise what should be done inside her frontiers. In the military sense, it is a difficult position and it may be that, from a purely practical consideration apart from pacifism, Mahatma Gandhi's method is considered the best alternative. That is a possibility, because under no circumstances are we prepared to accept the fate of France.

Q: In an event of Japanese aggression, what would be the reaction of the Congress to the British war efforts? Will it be one of non-embarrassment?

JN: In the complex situation created by the present War, our sympathy naturally went to a certain cause and a certain group. That was one reason for our attitude of non-embarrassment in our dealings with the British, but no such question can arise in the case of Japanese aggression. We will have to create a spirit of resistance and noncooperation—resistance in the first instance by individuals without caring for consequences, which will raise the tone of the people and create conditions making the position of the invader fairly difficult. The fact is that other countries have not thought of resistance in that way, but the people of India, having been trained in that way, can adopt it, as there is no other satisfactory way.

Q: In what respects can a National Government help the people in fighting aggression as compared with the present government?

JN: The present structure of the government is totally incapable of really conducting any big thing, especially a war, effectively or suitably.

It is quite impossible for the present government to create the psychology, the morale, the mass enthusiasm necessary for a total war, for a mass war effort, or for industrial production. Rather it is the reverse. The present government creates a kind of passive mass opposition. The first essential factor to create mass enthusiasm is to get rid of that feeling of hostility which is a legacy of generations, more especially of recent years.

I cannot conceive of any other government being so incompetent. The present government's extraordinary lack of competence can be deduced from the attitude of noncooperation adopted by them in the matter of the development of such industries as automobile, aeroplane and shipbuilding. It is patent throughout that even in this severe trial of war, they are thinking of not developing any industry which may conflict with British industry now or after the War.

When I was in prison all papers relating to the National Planning Committee, of which I am the President, were prevented from reaching me. I got all other papers but not these. There were plenty of reports from different sub-committees of the National Planning Committee, which I could have dealt with in prison but none was permitted to reach me. No wonder, not only Congressmen but even those people, who have nothing to do with the Congress, and scientists, who could be engaged in helping in the research work essential for war purposes, are fed up.

Furthermore, the government is creating new vested interests, chiefly foreign. It was bad enough to have had to deal with the old vested interests. The least one could expect was that it would not create new ones. For instance, the handing over to a big Calcutta firm of the sulphur deposits recently discovered in Baluchistan. Even if it were an Indian firm I would object, because it is for the state to control such national resources.

Q: Will the closing of the Burma Road cripple Chinese resistance?

JN: The closing of the Burma Road will not cripple Chinese resistance. Even apart from a new road being made to link China with Assam, China has developed her own war production. This development is a most fascinating thing, particularly the development of the Chinese industrial cooperatives. These cooperatives have not only been organised for war purposes but are laying the foundation of a real people's democracy in China which is in tune with the Chinese genius.

Q: How are these cooperatives working in China?

JN: A request was made to me when I was in Chungking for old used motor tyres from India. Further inquiries showed that these were intended for handcarts to be pushed with essential supplies over 700 miles of road. At first sight it would not strike as a quick or efficient method of transport, but the plan really was that people from each

village along the road would push the carts ten miles and then come back to their village. With China's enormous manpower, this immediately became an amazingly efficient and simple method which is analogous to the khadi programme of the Congress.

One of the programmes of the Congress to meet the war contingencies is to make groups of villages self-sufficient in regard to the necessities of life, by encouraging food crops as against commercial crops.

9. Imperialism and China¹

I have come to Calcutta after a long time; last time I came here it was on my way to Chungking. My present visit is not a usual one to meet friends and comrades but to be with Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek who have come to Calcutta. I wanted to be of any service to them as long as they were on Indian soil.

Unfortunately, their visit to India has taken place in such circumstances that we have not even been able to arrange for a public reception. Many of us had been looking forward to their visit, which is a great honour to us, but many of you may not be able to see them from a distance. We wanted to honour them and through them China, which they have magnificently led. Nevertheless their visit has been a great honour to us and has been a historic visit, for it marks a new epoch in the relations between India and China.

For long, I have dreamt of India and China marching together in the present and in the future. I went to Chungking with that hope. There I found that the Chinese leaders were also very keen to develop relations between India and China. I rejoiced and I was happy because I saw the future, the future in which India and China would march ahead hand in hand. I am convinced that there can be no peace or solution of the world's problems unless the problems of India and China are resolved. I think this for many reasons, but primarily because India and China together comprise nearly one half of the total population of the world. It is absurd to imagine that the world's problems, political or economic, can be solved without solving the problems of India and China. The fight China is putting up is a part of the great fight that is going on in the world for democracy and freedom.

1. Speech at Shraddhanand Park, Calcutta, 20 February 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 22 February 1942, and also from Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

When Marshal and Madame Chiang Kai-shek came here, I was very happy despite the fact that we were not able to give them a public reception. I am happy that they came and met some of our leaders, met some of our people and had a glimpse of India.

The Generalissimo is a very remarkable man. He has proved himself to be a successful leader of the people and a successful general and captain in war. He is one of the very few leaders who stand out prominently in the world today. Today if you visit China you will find that every Chinese citizen accepts the greatness of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek. It is by accepting the greatness of his leadership that the unity of China has been brought about. They now look up to him for leading them to victory and building up a new China.

Madame Chiang Kai-shek, who is his consort, is not only his partner in his life's journey but has been a fellow-warrior with him, standing side by side with him in China's battle for freedom. She has inspired the women of China, the youth and men of China, and has become a symbol of China's invincibility and her magnificent spirit of resistance. It has been an honour to have them here in your city. Those who have been fortunate to meet them can never forget them or their cause. They will always inspire the two great nations not only in the present but also in the future to improve the relations between India and China.

The fundamental need for Indians today is to get rid of the complexes of uncertainty and fear. Many enthusiastic young men are shouting slogans. I myself shouted slogans in the past and will shout in the future. But these slogans are superficial today and cannot play any important part. Today the only appropriate slogan is a bomb explosion, the sound of which drowns all other slogans. How will you meet that slogan—that is the problem. If you think that you will be able to face the great happenings by shouting slogans, then I am afraid the work cannot be accomplished.

Look at the world. What is it like? What is happening? Great empires are crumbling before our eyes, huge governmental structures are falling. No one knows when this War will end and what will be its outcome. We cannot escape that, no one is going to escape from it. What can we do under these circumstances? Are we brave and united enough to face all the consequences of this terrible catastrophe?

Some people think that because Japan and Germany are against Britain, they deserve our sympathy. We have always said that we will always oppose British imperialism or any other imperialism and fascism and Nazism. Therefore do not err by asking an outsider to help you in fighting the enemy. Therein lies the danger, therein lies the peril,

and if anyone of us thinks that way he can only be said to be suffering from slavish mentality. We shall not bow to any outsider or seek his help. We shall face all our problems ourselves as men.

My dear friends, a long time ago we decided to free our country. We have embarked on a ship in which we have travelled through the perilous seas for many years. We have to travel through stormier seas in the future. It is possible that many of us will suffer, and we may even perish and sink. But whatever dangers may come we shall face them as men. Let us be brave at heart, let us take courage from the examples of our Chinese brothers and sisters and face any aggression and any aggressor who dares to think of subjecting India. Let us build up strength, forget petty differences, and work for the Congress programme. We have to face the future and we shall face it whatever the consequences might be.

10. Visit of Chinese Leaders to India¹

The visit of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang to India has created a deep impression on the Indian people who have regretted that opportunities of giving them a popular welcome were not available. In recent years India has turned more towards China and thought of ancient contacts and cultural and commercial relations between the two countries through thousands of years. The Generalissimo pointed out the remarkable fact that throughout this long period there was absence of aggression on either side inspite of a common land frontier of three thousand kilometres. Ever since Japanese aggression began in Manchuria, India condemned it and expressed warm sympathy with China.

The Sino-Japanese War resulted in opening land routes between India, Burma and China. Apart from material advantages of these routes they have had powerful psychological effect on both countries. China, cut off from her eastern and southern parts, looked west towards Asia and more especially towards India. When I visited China two and a half years ago I was met everywhere with the desire for closer contacts with India.

1. Statement to the *News Chronicle* (London), Allahabad, 28 February 1942. Only some extracts of this statement were printed in the *News Chronicle* of 4 March 1942. We are giving the full statement from the J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek came to us as a living symbol of the magnificent resistance of China against Japan. He came also as a symbol of not only past friendship but of present and future comradeship. It seems almost as if destiny itself were bringing India and China together again and I can hardly conceive of a future in which these two great and ancient countries, so unlike and yet so fundamentally like each other, will not cooperate for their mutual and the world's good. Many people in India think in terms of a larger federation of which China and India will be members.

Our full sympathies are with the Chinese people and we would welcome all help to flow to them. Our admiration for their heroic resistance is however tempered with regret at our present inability to be of much service to them. Perhaps if we had had a chance and had to defend our freedom we could also have galvanized our people as Chinese have done. But there must be deliverance and present freedom to defend if masses are to be moved. Intellectual arguments or fear of worse consequences do not affect people who are weary of their present lot and passionately resent it. We have seen what has happened in Malaya and parts of Burma. Indian people are politically more advanced and cannot therefore be affected so much by interested propaganda from Axis countries which flows daily in the Hindustani broadcasts from Tokyo, Bangkok, Berlin and Rome. We know we have to resist all aggressors by best means and methods at our disposal and cannot submit to any domination.

This War is likely to be a long one and what happens in India will make vital difference to it as well as to the future that will emerge out of it. In that future free India and free China will pull together and no world arrangement which fails to settle their problems is going to endure. Asia is going to play a big part in the years to come.

11. China Brought Nearer¹

The sudden developments in the war situation have brought China nearer to us and many who had not given a thought to India's external relations are now forced by circumstances to think of them. War inevitably fills our minds and will do so as it shakes and breaks up the

1. Message to *The Hindu* on the occasion of China Day, New Delhi, 6 March 1942. *The Hindu*, 7 March 1942.

world we knew. But India and China will survive, as they have survived so much in the past, and the question of their relations to each other will be with us. That question has already been answered. For destiny itself seems intent on throwing them together. During the last decade almost unconsciously we have been drawn towards each other and now the visit of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang has quickened the process.

This visit came strangely and unexpectedly, but the new bonds between China and India will remain. The Generalissimo expressed repeatedly his wish that cultural and other contacts between the two countries should be developed. There are many ways of doing so even during the crisis of war. One of the ways he suggested was the exchange of professors and scholars between Indian and Chinese universities and I would recommend this especially to our universities and I shall gladly help in putting them in touch with responsible authorities in China.

Let us face the reality of today—the reality of war, of death and destruction and possible invasion. We cannot and must not get away from reality. Whatever happens, let us face it as men.

But behind and ahead of that reality of today lie the realities of yesterday and tomorrow. Both China and India have experience of long yesterdays of our past history and in our subconscious selves we carry the memories of hundreds of generations with all that they have to teach, of joy and sorrow, of strength and weakness, of wisdom and folly. Our waters run deep. We are not froth and foam on the surface, which vanish when strong winds blow. So we shall pass from the ever-changing reality of today to the reality of tomorrow, when we shall hold our own again, not subject to the whims of others. In that reality to come, India and China will hold together.

Meanwhile let us be calm in the midst of storm. Let us hold to our purpose and not bow our heads before insolent might, in whatever guise it may come, old or new. Let us acquit ourselves like men.

12. India-China Friendship¹

Many years ago I thought and dreamt of China and India coming closer to one another, meeting again after a long separation and cooperating

1. Broadcast on China Day, New Delhi, 7 March 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 8 March 1942.

to their mutual advantage. When fate and circumstance sent me to China two and a half years ago, that dream became more vivid and my mind was filled with the days of long ago when pilgrims and travelers crossed the oceans and mountains between China and India in search of the rich cultural inheritance which each country possessed. I saw myself in the long line of those pilgrims journeying to the haven of my desire. The recent visit of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and Madame Chiang seemed to bring that dream very near to realization. We had in our midst the very symbols of China and they came to us bringing goodwill for India and her people, and their ardent desire for closer bonds with our country. They brought China very near to us and their presence itself was an inspiration. Rocklike they had stood in the midst of peril and disaster and never flinched, and out of misfortune itself they had plucked the fine flower of youth and hope and strength. The Generalissimo was the symbol of China's freedom and unity and the determination which never wavers; the radiant lady who came with him and who was his partner in life's journey showed us how graciously womanhood can face even the storm of war when the cause of freedom beckons. Together with millions of their countrymen and countrywomen they had played the game of life and death and thrown themselves in that brave adventure which had transformed China and astonished the world.

And so the dream came very near to me and took shape, and I saw the future filled with hope because China and India were friends and comrades in the great adventure of man. The countries of Europe were small and stuffy, the history of Europe, in spite of its brilliant periods, was a mere episode in man's story. But India and China looked back to thousands of years and, drawing strength from their rich heritage, had survived the shocks and catastrophies that might otherwise have overwhelmed them. They will survive the perils and dangers of today also and, I have no doubt, will forge new bonds which will keep them linked together in friendship and comradeship. May good fortune attend China in the present and in the future and the victory she has richly deserved be hers in full measure.

13. We Shall Keep Faith¹

To the Chinese people I repeat that we shall keep faith with them whatever happens. We shall do so not only because China's freedom is very precious to us but also because with it is intertwined the freedom of India. With China unfree, our own freedom will be endangered and worth little purchase. Whatever we do now, constrained by circumstance, is aimed at the achievement of India's independence so that we may fight with all our strength and will against the aggressor in India and China. Free India can do so effectively; not so subject India with all her great strength chained up. So in this time of danger and peril we renew our faith in China. We believe that this great War is a mighty revolution which will only succeed on the basis of freedom for all peoples. Without Indian freedom now, it will fail of its purpose and lead us all into blind and dangerous alleys. This is the reason why India's freedom becomes an urgent and immediate necessity and cannot be postponed to the hereafter. The very peril that surrounds us all calls for it.

To the people of China and their great leaders, Generalissimo and Madame Chiang Kai-shek, I send greetings and pay homage to the heroism which has shone like a bright star during the past five years of war and infinite suffering.

1. Message to the people of China, Bombay, 8 August 1942, *The Free Press Journal*, 25 October 1942.

THE CONGRESS

1. To Mrs. B.L. Rallia Ram¹

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

Dear Mrs. Rallia Ram,
Thank you for your letter and your good wishes. I am afraid there is no chance of my going to the Punjab. I have other and more important work to do. I am not likely to achieve any wonderful result by paying a brief visit to the Punjab. It is unfortunate to have party differences² but such things happen elsewhere and we need not be frightened too much by them.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In October-November 1941, a section of the Punjab Congressmen led by Shri Ram Sharma and Gopi Chand Bhargava considered the need for the Congress to enter the assemblies.

2. To Sri Prakasa¹

Allahabad
January 5, 1942

My dear Prakasa,
I hope you are coming here on the 8th for our Council meeting.² It is important that we should discuss the new situation that has arisen before we go to the A.I.C.C. There are many elements of confusion, and I might be able to throw some light on the Bardoli proceedings. We ought to be prepared for possible developments as otherwise they will come as a surprise.

You must have seen that Gandhiji has agreed to spend an extra day in Benares and will meet a number of Congress workers from the province there on the 22nd. I suppose the Benares Congress Committee is making arrangements for this. As to who should be invited to this meeting, we shall consider on the 8th.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. The Executive Council of the U.P.P.C.C. met at Allahabad on 8-9 January 1942.

It is possible that I might accompany Gandhiji from Wardha to Benares after the A.I.C.C. Probably we shall reach Benares on the morning of the 21st. May I stay with you then? You are likely to be full up. It is just possible, though I am not sure at all, that Indira might accompany me.

I have asked Narendra Deva to attend our Council meeting on the 8th if at all he is well enough to come.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To Narendra Deva¹

Allahabad
January 5, 1942

My dear Narendra Deva,

Your letter reached me today. I shall not say anything about the Bardoli resolution because that is too big a subject to discuss. I was hoping to meet you here to have a talk on this and cognate matters. The Council meeting that is being held here on the 8th was hardly necessary from the point of view of passing resolutions. But it will serve a very useful purpose as those of us who attend will have a chance of discussing amongst ourselves a very complex situation. I could place before others some facts which perhaps they do not know; also some possible developments which might take place at the A.I.C.C. meeting. It is helpful to be prepared mentally as otherwise a new turn gives one a shock.

If you can possibly come here on the 8th, it would be a good thing. Meherally is under arrest,² though it is possible that he might be escorted to the Frontier and let off. In any event, Meherally could come here with you.

I should personally like very much to have you at Wardha for the A.I.C.C. meeting. You could have gone from there to Ahmednagar. It is hardly worthwhile for you to stay in the U.P. just because Gandhiji

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Yusuf Meherally, General Secretary of the All India Congress Socialist Party, was arrested on 3 January 1942 at Lahore and was put under judicial custody till 10 January 1942.

is coming here for a day or two. You will see much more of him in Wardha and after all decisions will be taken there. In Benares he will be busy with the University Silver Jubilee on the 21st. On the 22nd he has promised to address a number of Congress workers. This will probably be a crowd of two hundred or so, when any kind of talk is almost impossible.

I think it is best for you to go to Ahmednagar but perhaps later it will be worthwhile going to the Frontier, though there is that difficulty of the externment order from the Punjab. The Frontier climate is really delightful except in the summer. It is not so very cold, and anyway it will not be cold in March or April.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. To Abul Kalam Azad¹

Allahabad
January 24, 1942

My dear Maulana,

I returned from Benares today and received your letter.² I note that you intend coming here on the 2nd or 3rd February. It is not clear how long you intend staying here. I should like you of course to meet as many of our provincial workers as possible. There is however one difficulty. A large number of them were made to come to Benares two days ago to meet Gandhiji. Some of them will be coming in the second week of February. In between they have been asked to start work immediately in their districts. It will thus be a little difficult for most of them to undertake a long journey again. Many cannot afford this, especially those living in the northern and western parts of the province who have to come a very long way. Meetings of district Congress committees are being held in various districts and an attempt is being made to give a new impetus to our work.

I am therefore not very sanguine of many people being able to come here at short notice. Perhaps some people from the nearby towns like

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Azad, in his letter of 22 January 1942, requested that a meeting of the provincial committee workers be arranged on 3-4 February 1942.

Lucknow, Cawnpore and Benares might be able to come. I am informing them and suggesting that they might come on the 3rd afternoon.

For my part I had intended remaining here for the next ten days or so. But I may have to go to an important gathering in Gorakhpur district of peasant cane-growers on the 31st of this month. On the 7th I shall go to Cawnpore for two or three days. Meanwhile I shall probably visit certain rural areas in the Allahabad district.

I should particularly like to know if you would be agreeable to addressing a public meeting in Allahabad during your visit here. We would greatly appreciate this and I am sure it would do a lot of good. Please send me a telegram to say if you are willing.

Kripalani is not here. He has gone to Fyzabad district but he will come back within a few days.

Khan Bahadur Allahbux,³ the Sind Premier, arrived here today and is returning to Karachi tomorrow morning. We had a talk about his constitutional difficulties with the Governor⁴ and it seems to me that from every point of view he ought to take up a strong line. Even from a narrow constitutional interpretation he appears to be completely justified. The larger viewpoint points to the same conclusion. He consulted Kailash Nath Katju and Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru also. Both agreed that he was completely right and should not yield to the Governor. He hopes to meet you when you go north.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (1900-1943); represented Sind in the Bombay Legislative Council from 1926 to 1936; formed the Ittehad Party to fight the elections to the Sind Legislative Assembly in 1937; Chief Minister of Sind, 1938-39 and again from 1941 till his dismissal in September 1942 for having challenged the arbitrary exercise of the Governor's powers; presided over the All India Independent Muslims Conference in Delhi in April 1940; was assassinated on 14 May 1943 by a Muslim fanatic.

4. The Governor, Sir Hugh Dow, used his special powers under the 1935 Act to reject the name of an Indian, suggested by the Sind Government, for the post of revenue officer for the Lloyd barrage and instead appointed an Englishman. In December 1941, Allahbux told the Assembly that the Governor's action was not only unconstitutional but also racial. He decided to lodge complaints with the Viceroy and the Secretary of State, but in fact no representation was made.

5. Concentrate on Major Issues¹

In view of the critical situation that has arisen and that threatens to grow and envelop the country, it is incumbent on all Congressmen to concentrate on the Congress programme and for each member of a Congress elective committee to make himself responsible for daily work in furtherance of the programme. If any member is unable to undertake this responsibility, he is advised to resign from his office or place on the committee, and someone else who is prepared to undertake that work should take his place.

Further it is essential that all responsible Congressmen should function in the furtherance of the present programme through the Congress and from the Congress platform and not through other organizations as any functioning through such other organizations creates confusion in the public mind and leads to a diversion and wastage of energy and occasionally to conflicting interpretations of Congress policy. In particular this policy should be followed in regard to the kisans who form the backbone of the Congress organization in the province, and whose interests must be considered as paramount by the Congress.

The present situation demands concentration on the major issues confronting the country and an avoidance of all minor and sectional matters. It is on those major issues, therefore, that Congressmen should concentrate and their basic task should be to work for the Congress and through the Congress, so that the Congress organization may grow even more capable of facing, on behalf of the nation, the urgent and vital problems that rise from day to day.

1. U.P.P.C.C. Council resolution drafted by Jawaharlal, Allahabad, 4 February 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

6. Congressmen and Other Organisations¹

The Council have noted that certain organizations, which claim to consist of Congressmen, and some other organizations which contain Congressmen among their members, have adopted and are pursuing policies which are diametrically opposed to the Congress policy and programme. The Council wish to make it clear that no such rejection of and attack

1. U.P.P.C.C. Council resolution drafted by Jawaharlal, Allahabad, 4 February 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

on the fundamental Congress policy can be permitted from within the Congress by persons who are members of the Congress. Such an adoption of a line of policy or activity opposed to the Congress policy is not only subversive of all discipline and undermines the Congress organization, but it is highly injurious to the nation. Those who desire to further a policy or programme opposed to that of the Congress are at liberty to do so from outside the ranks of the Congress but they cannot be permitted to remain Congress members and at the same time to discredit the organization and undermine its policy. Disciplinary action will have to be taken against all such persons. In the present state of growing crisis and peril, it is essential for the Congress to function as a well-knit organization working with single-minded devotion in the furtherance of its programme for the service of the nation. The president is requested to bring to the notice of the Council without avoidable delay the names of members of the Congress who act contrary to the Congress policy in terms of the previous resolutions, and in cases which he considers serious he is authorised to take immediate action by the suspension of the person concerned pending the Council's decision.²

2. S.K.D. Paliwal, Sampurnanand and Sri Prakasa were appointed to a committee to receive complaints against Congressmen.

7. To Choithram P. Gidwani¹

Allahabad
February 7, 1942

My dear Choithram,

Your letter.² I saw Allahbux when he came here. I was clearly of opinion that he could not possibly submit to the Governor and I told him so. It seemed to me that even constitutionally speaking the Governor was wrong, Allahbux right. Apart from the constitutional aspect, it was even more clear that Allahbux could not submit. Allahbux agreed with me completely and, I understand, that Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's advice on the constitutional issue was the same as mine and he fully supported the stand that Allahbux had taken up so far.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter of 31 January 1942, Gidwani wanted to know Tej Bahadur Sapru's opinion about the Sind constitutional issue.

Allahbux is now meeting the Maulana in Delhi and I have little doubt that he will stick to his position whatever the consequences. This of course will be welcome to you.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

8. Dirty Politics in Orissa¹

Though grave happenings are taking place in India and near India and the future is full of uncertainty and peril, what has taken place in Orissa recently² fills one with surprise and disgust. There is a certain elementary decency which people observe even towards their opponents in public life in politics. But some people who apparently call themselves Ministers in Orissa today have demonstrated that they do not possess even this elementary decency. Some of them broke their pledges solemnly given. And then, afraid of being defeated in the provincial assembly, they started arresting those members who might vote against them. Compelled to have elections, they started arresting those who might work against them in the election campaign.

Well-known leaders of the province like Shri Harekrushna Mahtab and others were thus arrested. Shri Govind Pradhan,³ M.L.A., was also arrested. The simplest course for these people who call themselves Ministers apparently is to arrest the entire opposition in the assembly. Then they can be assured of a majority. They have good precedence for this both in Czarist Russia and Nazi Germany. But it is time they understood that this kind of thing is not going to be tolerated in this country and anyone who indulges in it will have to pay heavily. It is beyond endurance that such tactics should be indulged in by anybody, more especially those who call themselves Indians and degrade the name of our country.

1. Message for bye-election for Orissa Assembly, Allahabad, 27 February 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 5 March 1942.
2. Some non-Congress members and a dissident group of Congressmen in the Orissa Assembly, headed by Godavaris Misra, formed a coalition ministry on 25 November 1941. And before the budget session, on 12 February 1942, some prominent Congressmen including Nabakrushna Chaudhuri and Mohan Das were arrested to avoid a no-confidence vote.
3. (b. 1907); prominent Congress worker of Orissa till 1943 when he joined the Communist Party of India; member, Orissa Legislative Assembly, 1937-42, 1952-57, 1957-61.

In the bye-election that is taking place Shri Uma Charan Patnaik⁴ has been set up as the Congress candidate.⁵ I send him my good wishes and I hope that the people of his constituency will vote for him and support him in every way and not allow themselves to be tyrannised over by a group of people who have already discredited themselves utterly in the eyes of all decent people.

4. (1902-1961); prominent Congressman of Orissa; member, Orissa Legislative Assembly, 1942-45, 1946-51; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-57, 1957-61; his works include *Volunteer Organisations in India* and *The Chilka Scheme*.
5. On 17 March 1942, Patnaik defeated Tikayat Saheb of Kanika who had the support of the ministerial party.

9. To Abul Kalam Azad¹

Allahabad
March 4, 1942

My dear Maulana,

Two or three days ago I sent you a letter. This was sent to Wardha, copy to Calcutta. I do not know if it has reached you, nor do I know where you are.

The more I think of it the more worried I am at our not having a meeting of the Working Committee for such a long time. All manner of new and complex problems are arising and we remain passive and do not give much corporate thought to them. We await something affecting us to happen. This seems a weak attitude. It is true that nothing has happened to affect our fundamental position or to make us think of varying it in any way. But quite apart from this, we should give thought to the ever-changing scene and think also of the future as it seems to unfold itself.

If I had known in time that you were going to Wardha, I would have attempted to go there myself. Not being sure I could not do this. Also because I thought that in any event we would have to go there soon. It seems to me very important that we should have full discussions with Gandhiji and our other colleagues at frequent intervals, or else there will be a tendency to interpret events in different ways and to pull in separate directions.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

10. To Abul Kalam Azad¹

Allahabad
March 5, 1942

My dear Maulana,

I have your letter of the 3rd March about the women's branch of the A.I.C.C. office.² I am not sending you a telegram as it is difficult to say much in a few words.

Your idea of having an advisory committee is good, but a committee spread out all over India can seldom meet. Still it may occasionally meet to consider the problem as a whole. As for the appointment of such a committee, much depends on one's approach to the problem. That is, should there be more or less provincial representation or at any rate representatives from the principal parts of India? Though theoretically this will look well, again it will be difficult for them to meet.

One possible way of dealing with this matter is to have zonal representatives who taken together form an advisory committee. In appointing zonal representatives, to some extent local or provincial people will have to be consulted, though this need not be always necessary.

Anyway a committee such as you suggest might be an improvement and would be helpful to Mrs. Kripalani. The names you have suggested are good. It is possible to suggest a few more names but it is difficult to pick and choose. Would not the presence of Sarojini Naidu on such a committee be desirable? Of course as a member of the Working Committee she need not join any such advisory committee and whenever necessary she can always be invited to the advisory committee meetings.

My own conception of the women's branch of the A.I.C.C. is that it should collect all material relating to women's activities in India, it should keep in touch with all women's organisations in India, it should particularly keep in touch with such women's work as is being done by Congresswomen and through Congress organisations, it should send such suggestions as may be desirable for the coordination of these various activities, and it should issue special directions to provincial Congress committees in this behalf. It cannot undertake direct work of organisation, etc.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Azad informed Jawaharlal that in order to develop enthusiasm in the working of the A.I.C.C. women's branch, he had appointed an advisory body which included Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Mridula Sarabhai, and Sucheta Kripalani.

Again in the present crisis attention should not be given to long distant programmes but rather to the immediate need. Women should address themselves to the local programmes of self-defence and self-sufficiency as outlined by the Congress. Their work will be chiefly confined to women. It is very important that this approach be made to women as public morale depends greatly on how women feel and act. If they are given some work in their own local areas, they are less likely to give way to a feeling of helplessness and they will feel that they are parts of a larger cooperative enterprise. Immediate problems are arising in some places of molestation of women. This kind of thing is likely to increase as conditions deteriorate. To face this problem women can be of great help, for it is essentially a psychological problem. My own little experience has been that women are anxious to know what they can do at present and any lead given to them will yield results. I am all against treating women as helpless human beings who cannot look after themselves and who must run away from the danger zone. At any time this is bad policy and makes them even more helpless than they are. In present circumstances it is completely pointless as you cannot limit the danger zone. Any and every place may become the danger zone and even the privacy of a house will not be outside this zone. So the only way to tackle the problem is to make women realise that they have to and can face it and to prepare them mentally and otherwise for this.

My sister, Vijayalakshmi, is going to Delhi this evening and she will discuss this matter with Aruna Asaf Ali.³ I am also sending a copy of this letter to Mrs. Kripalani.

As you know, my sister is the President for this year of the All India Women's Conference and thus she as well as many other Congresswomen are functioning also through the Women's Conference. In some provinces, notably Gujarat, Congresswomen are controlling the Women's Conference. It is desirable that every cooperation should be given whenever possible to the Women's Conference in doing the work which we think should be done. This may not be possible in all parts of India. Generally speaking a duplication of organisations will lead to waste of efforts and energy.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. (b. 1909); married Asaf Ali; underground worker in the Quit India movement; President, Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee, 1947-48; Mayor of Delhi, 1958-60; winner of Lenin Peace Prize; founder-Chairman of the daily *Patriot*.

11. To Syed Mahmud¹

Wardha
March 17, 1942

My dear Mahmud,
Your letters dated 11th and 12th have reached me here. I am sorry you are not coming here for the Working Committee because it is important that we must all discuss current problems and difficulties. It is no good writing letters and complaining about the situation. You are needlessly excited about various matters. There is difficulty about food in many places, especially in Allahabad, but we do not get excited. As a matter of fact Congress people are doing very good work in our province and we hope to do more.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

12. Defence of Subhas Chandra Bose¹

Wardha
19/3/42

Sir,

In your leading article appearing in *The Statesman* of the 15th March you have made a very grave allegation. You state that "intimate friends of Mr. Gandhi and members of the Working Committee of Congress have told us that they had evidence that Mr. Subhas Bose received funds from the enemy when he was in this country."

We have had our differences with Mr. Subhas Bose and for many years he has not been in the Congress and has in fact opposed it. But the charge made in your editorial is so extraordinary that I am unable to believe it. I have consulted all my colleagues of the Working Committee who are here at present and they have also expressed their astonishment at this surprising allegation. Whatever our differences with

1. Letter to the Editor, *The Statesman*, drafted by Jawaharlal. A.I.C.C. Papers. File No. G-7/1939, N.M.M.L. This letter was not printed in *The Statesman*.

Mr. Subhas Bose in the past or in the present, we cannot imagine that the charges, allegations you make can be true. In fairness to all concerned will you please let me know the basis of your allegation?

Yours,
General Secretary
A.I.C.C.

13. On Election of Delegates to the U.P.P.C.C.¹

As a member of the Council it is not proper for me to speak on the resolution but the turn the discussion has taken compels me to speak.²

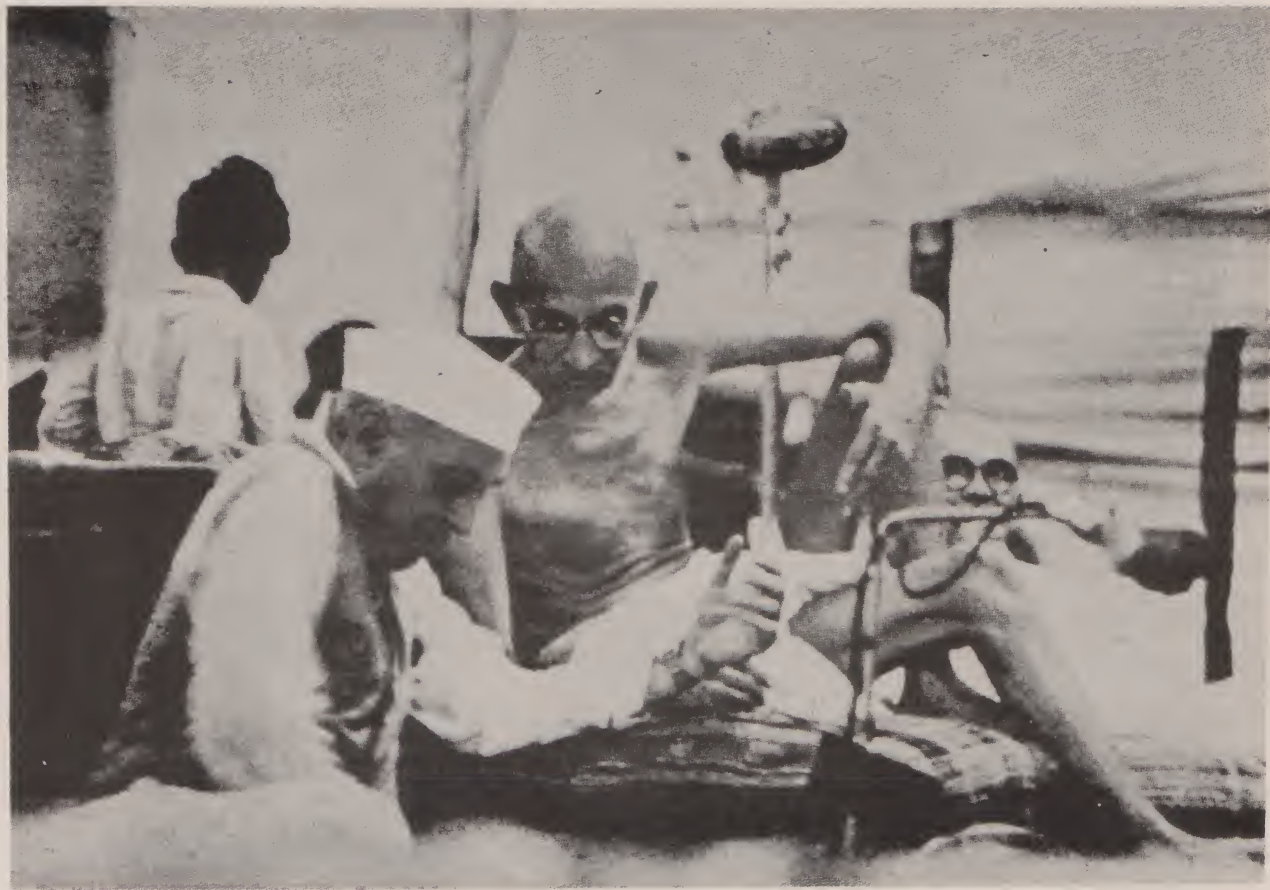
I myself am responsible for the resolution in the Council. I am in favour of periodic re-elections from top to bottom. It gives life to a democratic organisation, and prevents it from getting stagnant. I had pressed for it not only in the U.P. Congress but also in the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee.

Practical difficulties about the election of delegates had been suggested to me in justification of not holding the elections for the district and town committees.³ But I see no reason why the higher committees should not be re-elected. If minor constitutional difficulties stand in the way, they should be set aside. We are living in extraordinary times which call for extraordinary methods.

In pressing my point of view before the Council, my mind is solely influenced by the consideration that already two and a half years have elapsed since the present Council was elected. How the proposal affected the Communists or any other group, I am unable to understand.

But I find that the debate has taken the turn of the usual Communist Party and Socialist Party controversies about which we read so

1. Speech at the U.P.P.C.C. meeting, Lucknow, 30 May 1942. From *National Herald*, 1 June 1942.
2. The resolution accepting the resignations of the office-bearers was passed, and the President was requested to nominate a new Council, ensuring that new members be those who had full faith in the official policy of the Congress.
3. The U.P.P.C.C. President had expressed several difficulties arising from the new situation in holding the elections, but had suggested that the office-bearers could resign and seek re-election.



WITH MAHATMA GANDHI AT MEETING OF WORKING COMMITTEE, BOMBAY, 5 AUGUST 1942



AT A.I.C.C. SESSION, BOMBAY, 7 AUGUST 1942

much in the papers. Luckily I am not interested in such disputes. I am disgusted with their obsessions with these, their slogan-mongering, their hurling at each other of the quotations from Lenin and Marx. If that be Marxism, I am thoroughly sick of it.

I myself had studied Marxism, but I had not been affected by it in that manner. The most important thing I have learnt from Marx is that one should not treat Marxist books as shastras but use one's own mind.

Through slogans like "people's war" and "imperialist war" it is being sought to label a complex thing as an elementary thing. My own mind is a complex mind and rebels against such an over-simplification. There could be nothing more absurd than saying that the present war is a people's war for India. It is something different to express the wish that the present war should be turned into a people's war for India but to call it a people's war now is a lie.

Similarly I warn the imperialist war school against becoming prisoners of a phrase. The present war is too complex a thing to be clinched in a phrase. The day of Europe in spite of Hitler's victories is over. Europe is committing suicide in the present war. The future belongs to America, Russia and China.

In the present conflict which envelops the whole world, India's freedom is naturally our first consideration. However much I might sympathise with Russia, my picture of world freedom is incomplete without India's freedom. If China is broken by Japan, India would be strangled. My own sympathies are with China and I have been the bearer of many messages of solidarity and support to the Chinese people. I do not want to be a traitor to China. That would be below India's dignity. But at the same time I cannot sacrifice India's freedom to the freedom of any other country.

The re-election is a matter of routine. The resolution does not have implications of confidence or non-confidence in the Council. I am in favour of a more homogenous Council. Such people, as do not agree entirely with the Congress policy, should not be there. I myself sometimes feel that I can be of greater service outside the Council. My own mind works differently from that of many members of the Council and yet I have to draft resolutions for it. This should not be construed that I intend to resign from the Council. I think the proposal to keep some members and drop others is absurd. I regret that my recent preoccupations in connection with the visit of Marshal Chiang Kai-shek and Sir Stafford Cripps, had prevented me from devoting as much time to Congress work in the province as I wanted.

14. Gorakhpur¹

The Council of the Provincial Congress Committee passed a resolution² a few days ago about Gorakhpur and much that takes place in that notorious district. Unfortunately the press censor, not liking too much of the truth, sat upon this resolution and prevented its full publication. Now comes the news that Shri Rawat,³ the new secretary of the P.C.C., has been arrested there immediately after the speech he delivered.⁴

The Gorakhpur authorities obviously do not allow the grass to grow under their feet. They take no risks and they pounce on anybody they dislike as soon as they see him. The representatives of the "Land of Hope and Glory and the Mother of the Free" in Gorakhpur know their job and do it thoroughly. What does it matter if large numbers of tenants suffer and Congressmen are arrested? They are doing their little bit in the war for freedom and democracy. Possibly it has not struck them that this may have an adverse effect on that war for freedom and democracy. Possibly they have not thought out the consequences of their enthusiasm for the "Land of Hope and Glory." Gorakhpur has become a symbol to many of us of all that is worst in British rule in India and by that symbol that rule is going to be judged, condemned and put an end to.

And a time will come when a big broomstick will be required to clear this unhappy land of all relics of imperialist domination and oppression. We shall not have to wait too long for that time.

1. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 6 June 1942.
2. The resolution of 1 June 1942 on 'Repression' stated that "in Gorakhpur the conduct of the authorities is such as to be beyond endurance; tickets for police *dangals* are forcibly sold to poor and unsophisticated peasants; the police and deputy collector seem to be privileged to act autocratically; no care is taken of the difficulties of people; the city magistrate of Gorakhpur has used improper threats to stop the holding of the Chauri Chaura conference; all sorts of complaints are coming to the provincial office regarding war efforts."
3. Jagan Prasad Rawat (b. 1904); Parliamentary Secretary in U.P., 1946, Deputy Minister for Agriculture, 1952, Minister for Public Works, 1963, and Minister for Panchayati Raj and Local Self-government, 1970.
4. Was arrested on 2 June 1942.

15. To Anumela Rama Govind Sarma¹

Wardha
June 11, 1942

Dear friend,²

I have your letter. I am glad to learn that you are constructing a Congress Bhavan with materials and labour from the villages. This self-help and reliance is very commendable and I wish you all success in your endeavour. I hope that this plan will be a symbol of the ideals of freedom which we cherish and will be open to all without any distinction or question of status.

This letter is not meant to be inscribed on your building. But if you want such an inscription, I suggest this:

This is the house of freedom where all may come.
We labour here for a free India and for the
freedom and equality of all her children.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Joint Secretary, at this time, of the West Krishna District Congress Committee, Madras.

16. Campaign Against Abdul Ghaffar Khan¹

News from the Frontier Province is scarce except such news as comes through official sources. This official or semi-official news is often tainted and contains many wrong allegations. Whenever I have gone to the Frontier I have had experience of the difficulty of sending out proper news through the normal agencies or otherwise. It appears that restrictions on such news being sent out are stricter in the Frontier Province than elsewhere. In India the result is that people in the rest of India know little of what is happening in this highly important part of India. It is important in many ways and specially so in regard to the new situation that is developing.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 2 July 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 3 July 1942.

Few people know of the quiet and great work that Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan has been carrying on during the last six months.² He does not believe in ostentation but he has gone to villages seeing his people, organizing them and encouraging them in every way. During the last six weeks or more, a very virulent campaign has been carried on against Badshah Khan and his brother Dr. Khan Sahib, as well as generally against the Congress and the Khudai Khidmatgars in the Frontier.³ Not finding political reasons for attacking them, domestic and private matters were exploited for this purpose and all manner of false statements circulated. The Frontier Provincial Congress Committee issued a *communiqué* to the press dealing with this matter, but it appears that no publicity was given to it. I am giving this *communiqué* below as issued by the Frontier P.C.C.

We warn the public against the propaganda that is being carried on against Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan—the undisputed leader of the Pathans—and the Khudai Khidmatgar movement in certain sections of the press. It has been hinted that Khudai Khidmatgars have resigned in large numbers, acute differences have arisen and party politics is raising its ugly head.

Not a single Khudai Khidmatgar has so far resigned. The Khudai Khidmatgars are united like one man under the leadership of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and all talk of parties among them is baseless. The differences, etc., exist only in the imagination of a few interested people who yearn for offices and think that by encouraging such talk they can gain their end. The government is presumably at the back of all such propaganda. But such people have no following. Every true nationalist in the Frontier realizes that we can have nothing to do with the British Government in India much less with offices. Whatever attraction the parliamentary programme may have elsewhere in India it has certainly no place in Frontier politics.

2. He worked for the implementation of the constructive programme of the Congress and established *Markaz-e-Khudai Khidmatgar* (Main Centre of the Khudai Khidmatgars) on the bank of the River Sardaryab. He also advocated complete independence from the British and civil disobedience if called upon by Mahatma Gandhi.
3. The marriage of Khan Sahib's daughter to a Christian, Jaswant Singh led to communal criticism of the Khan brothers by *Maulvis* in mosques, who also gave anti-Congress speeches. The campaign was further patronised by the Frontier authorities. Rumours were also afloat about differences of opinion in the Frontier Congress and resignations of the Khudai Khidmatgars.

Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan's peaceful and constructive humanitarian work amongst villagers to make them self-sufficient in matters of food and cloth and for the maintenance of internal security has further endeared him especially to the poor people. He hopes to carry his message of peace and goodwill to the neighbouring tribal people also. He has been devoting all his energies to create a nonviolent and peaceful army for the service of the people during the coming critical times ahead. What the government has failed to achieve at the cost of millions of rupees he is trying to do purely through voluntary help. He deserves the sympathy and cooperation of every man and woman and child in the Frontier in this noble work. We hope that the Frontier masses will respond to his call and the press and journalists of India, who have the true interests of the nation at heart, will take up an impartial view of his work.

17. On Assumption of U.P. Congress Presidentship¹

Owing to the arrest of the President of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee,² I have been charged by the Provincial Congress Executive to act on his behalf. I have undertaken this burden of responsibility with some hesitation as I have already much work to do. But I could not say 'no' when a large number of our colleagues in our small Executive Council had already been arrested and sentenced or detained in prison. Seven of these have already gone in this way including our President and a Secretary and one of the most respected of our members and colleagues, till lately our Vice-President, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, Deoband.³ Maulana Hussain Ahmad's arrest came as a special surprise, for his main activities are those of the head of the famous educational institution. But nothing really can surprise us in the United Provinces. Because of all

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 9 July 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 10 July 1942.

2. See *ante*, p. 344.

3. He was arrested on 25 June 1942 at Saharanpur.

this and more that is likely to happen, the presidentship of the United Provinces Provincial Congress Committee is a difficult office. But I know my colleagues and thousands of Congress workers in the United Provinces and relying upon them I have assumed the burden. To them I make an appeal in these days of deep and enveloping crisis to hold together, be disciplined and be prepared for all sacrifices in the great cause we have at heart.

18. To P. Subbarayan¹

Wardha
July 10, 1942

My dear Subbarayan,

Thank you for your letter of July 7th which has just reached me.

I appreciate what you say in it. I entirely disagree with Rajaji's present policy but that does not mean that I do not respect him. I shall be sorry if any disrespect is shown to him. I heard today that he has resigned from the Assembly as well as from the Congress,² whatever this might mean. I suppose anyhow there is no room now for any kind of action.

I should have liked to see Mohan³ but I do not know when we are likely to meet. Indira and Feroze are in Kashmir.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. On 9 July 1942, he resigned from the Madras Assembly and the Congress after he was served with a show cause notice by the President of the Tamil Nadu Provincial Congress Committee on 5 July 1942, as to why no action should be taken against him for propagating a Congress-League settlement, installation of a National Government at the all-India level and popular governments in the provinces, and cooperation between the state and the people in defending India against the Axis powers.

3. Surendra Mohan Kumaramangalam (1916-1973); son of P. Subbarayan; member of the Communist Party of India; convicted in the Madras Conspiracy Case, 1941 but released unconditionally in June 1942; Advocate General of Tamil Nadu, 1966-67; Chairman, Indian Airlines, 1969-71; Union Minister of Steel and Mines from 1971 till his death in an air crash.

19. To S. K. Patil¹

Allahabad
27-7-1942

My dear Patil,²

Received your letter of the 24th July. I expect to reach Bombay by the Mail on the 3rd morning. Possibly Maulana Sahib may also be coming by that train. He intends doing so, but is not sure on account of his health.

I enclose a letter from Maharajkumar Sir Vijaya Anand. I understand that you are issuing tickets for visitors for the A.I.C.C. Please reserve a good ticket for him and inform him of it directly. He will of course pay the normal price of the ticket, but you should not ask a fancy price for it. Fancy price should be reserved for your rich friends in Bombay.

I have nothing in particular to suggest about the arrangements for the A.I.C.C. There is one matter, however, to which I might draw your attention. The usual arrangements for singing national songs are almost invariably bad. I wish you would look into this matter and get some really good singers for three songs: *Vandemataram*, Tagore's *Jana Gana Mana* and Iqbal's *Hindustan Hamara*. I think these are the only songs that should be permitted. Please do not get that very expert gentleman who sang at Ramgarh and elsewhere. Classical styles of singing are totally inappropriate at large public functions. The singing should be simple and forceful. Please also avoid the introduction of all manner of musical instruments on the dais. We cannot convert the A.I.C.C. into a concert party. I would prefer no musical accompaniment at all.

For my part, I do not like the Maharashtrian way of singing *Vandemataram*. It is too theatrical and has a certain musical comedy touch. I prefer the Bengali way. Usually trained school girls are the best singers.

Please take particular care to get a good singer for Iqbal's *Hindustan Hamara*. You should have just one song a day. *Vandemataram* to

1. File No. 3590/H/II-2, Police Commissioner's Office, Maharashtra Government Records, Bombay.
2. (b. 1900); imprisoned number of times from 1930-45; member, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1937-46; Mayor, Bombay, 1949-52; member, Lok Sabha, 1952-67, 1969-70; Union Minister for Irrigation and Power, 1957, Transport and Communications, 1958-59, Food and Agriculture, 1959-63 and Minister for Railways, 1964-67.

begin with and when the A.I.C.C. finally ends. On the second day's session, Iqbal's *Hindustan Hamara* at the beginning and on the third day Tagore's *Jana Gana Mana* at the beginning.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

20. Communists and the Congress¹

The question has been raised repeatedly as to the position of Communists and others, who disagree with the present basic policy of the Congress, continuing to remain in elective Congress committees. The basic policy of the Congress is dissociation with the war effort of the British Government. The Communist Party has openly proclaimed its help and support of this war effort and has criticized Congress policy in this matter. Many Communists have been discharged from jail apparently on the assurance that they will help in every way the British war effort. Obviously there is a basic and fundamental difference between this attitude and policy and the Congress policy. This difference which has so far been largely a theoretical one is now one of day-to-day work. This is bound to create difficulties and possibly conflicts.

In any event a clear direction has to be given to Congressmen and Congress committees on this subject to avoid confusion and waste of energy. This becomes even more imperative because of impending developments.

Communists and the Communist Party are perfectly entitled in their individual and group capacities to adopt any policy they like, whether one agrees with them or not. We are only concerned with them as Congressmen and more particularly, with them as members of Congress Executive Committees. It is manifestly wrong and absurd for anyone to be a member of an executive when he is opposed to the basic policy of that executive.

Most of our district and local Congress committees have no Communist members and have thus no such problem to face. A few committees have possibly some Communist members.

1. Press statement issued as officiating President, U.P. Provincial Congress Committee, Allahabad, 1 August 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 3 August 1942.

As the A.I.C.C. is meeting soon to adopt finally the policy which the Congress will pursue in the immediate future, it is not my desire to lay down any rule at this stage which will automatically exclude Communists. So far our policy has been to take action against individual Congressmen who clearly and deliberately offend against the basic Congress policy. It must be definitely understood, however, that whatever the final decision of the A.I.C.C. may be, it must be given effect to by all Congressmen, and no Congressman can carry on propaganda or agitation against it. In particular, any Congressman, who is a member of any Congress executive, cannot do so. In the event of his doing so, he will automatically cease to be a member of that executive.

Even meanwhile it is desirable that those Congressmen who disagree basically from the present Congress policy should not continue to remain in any executive of the Congress. To remain there is not fair either to the Congress or to themselves. In no event can they be *sanchalaks* of any committee, district, city, town, tahsil or *mandal*.

What I have written applies to all those who are opposed to Congress policy, whether they are members of the Communist Party, the Forward Bloc or any other group, or disagree fundamentally in their individual capacities.

It is not my desire, at this time of peril for all of us, to create further rifts and divisions in our ranks. But the very peril demands clarity of thought and action. A body of action, like the Congress, cannot allow disruptive elements to remain in its executives when united action is called for.

It should always be remembered that the Congress policy is one of organized nonviolence.

Pandit Keshav Deo Malaviya is issuing instructions to the Congress committees that no Communist or Forward Blocist or any other who does not fully agree with the Congress policy and the programme can act as a *sanchalak* in his or her district.

THE COMMUNAL ISSUE

1. To Ranjit M. Chetsingh¹

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

Dear Mr. Chetsingh,²

Thank you for your letter of the 6th.³ The communal problem is obviously one of those problems which fill our minds and each one of us has given it a deep and continuous attention. Naturally we should always try to arrest wrong tendencies. And yet many of the things we dislike are symptoms only and the real disease lies deeper. I am inclined to think with Gandhiji that the time is not yet for a unity conference.⁴ For my part I do not attach much importance to the method of working through unity conferences. The question is essentially a political one, other matters are subsidiary. I think that in spite of the wrong tendencies that you refer to, forces are at work which are likely to solve the basic problem. In dealing with such matters, as often in war itself, an indirect or flank attack is more successful than a direct or frontal attack.

I am not going to Wardha but I shall be going to Bombay soon, probably with the Maulana. I would of course be happy to meet you but the Maulana wants to reserve all our time during the journey for talks between ourselves.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Associated with the All India Council of Indian Christians, and with the Rasulia Settlement and Jamai Village Ashram at Hoshangabad.

3. In his letter he drew Jawaharlal's attention to the activities of sectional organisations aimed at emphasising and perpetuating all the diverse features in the common Indian heritage and wanted that something be done to arrest these tendencies.

4. Mahatma Gandhi, in his letter to Chetsingh on 23 November 1941, stated that while he was in full agreement that a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim problem was highly desirable and essential, he did not think that the time was ripe for a unity conference.

2. To Muhammad Abdus Sattar Kheiri¹

Allahabad
January 8, 1942

My dear Professor,²

I was happy to receive your letter.³ I look back to our meeting in Dehra Dun jail with pleasure and I am sure that I have profited by it. As you know, we hardly ever touched on any political subject as such. It has always seemed more important to me that each one of us should get to know the real background of the other person and thus develop sympathy and understanding. You helped me to do this and I am grateful to you.

The problem of India, as all problems in the world today, is extraordinarily complex and one has to deal with hundreds of varying and sometimes conflicting factors. Yet I think that throughout our difficulties we are moving towards our goal. That goal can only consist of cooperation and harmony between Hindus and Muslims and others in free India. Rest assured that we shall all work for that and rest assured that it will be achieved, though many things may happen in between that distress us. Sometimes a premature step does not bring good results. Sometimes it is better to be silent on a particular question. But even then the mind is full of it.

I hope you are keeping well in jail. Ranjit Pandit and I send you our good wishes.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1891-1945); Professor of German and French at Aligarh Muslim University; active in the Khaksar movement.
3. In his letter of 21 December 1941, he urged the need for settling the communal problem and expressed the wish that the Congress Working Committee at Bardoli would give top priority to the question of understanding between Hindus and Muslims.

3. To Syed Mahmud¹

Allahabad
February 2, 1942

My dear Mahmud,
I have your letter of the 25th January. I have read through your little book on the Hindu-Muslim problem.² It is well written and good. There are some parts and inferences in it with which I do not wholly agree, but on the whole I think it is an able presentation of the case from your point of view. I would of course have written somewhat differently in the sense that I would have emphasized certain aspects which are hardly touched upon by you. Your survey ignores some more or less recent developments and especially certain world aspects which affect India. Essentially, I think, the attitude of Jinnah and the Muslim League is governed by the desire to prevent radical changes or the democratisation of India not because of a Hindu majority but because the radical elements will put an end to semi-feudal privileges, etc. You hint at this in your letter. The whole conception of the Constituent Assembly is to bring out mass elements and urges which will not view the communal problem or other problems from the middle-class point of view which has landed us into this impasse. Personally I see no solution of the problem, however hard we may try, so long as the third party (the British) is not eliminated. We shall inevitably come near a solution when we are forced to agree by circumstances, the alternative being conflict on a big scale. That can only happen when it is clear that neither party can seek the help of the British or any other alien authority.

The correct course for both Congress and the Muslim League (as well as others) would have been to agree to one thing only retaining, if necessary, all their other differences, including if you like Pakistan.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter Mahmud wrote that the book in which he had suggested Congress-League *rapprochement*, was written a year before; this was not possible now because it was clear that "Jinnah wants to retain British rule in India". But still he wanted to retain that portion because he intended to work among the Muslims for a *rapprochement*. The Muslims, he argued, did not agree with Jinnah that the Congress should be treated as a Hindu body. "The impossibility of this partition should be brought before them and then it should be proved before them that it is not the Congress but Jinnah who does not want the *rapprochement*". The book also contained a chapter criticising the appearance of caste factionalism in the Bihar Congress ministry of 1937-38. On the advice of Mahatma Gandhi certain passages were deleted from the book.

That one thing is to join forces against all alien authority and intervention. Once this alien authority is excluded we fall back upon ourselves and either agree or fight. In all likelihood we then agree for the prospect of a real struggle will not be a pleasant one for anybody.

Jinnah puts the cart before the horse. He says no political progress till his conditions are accepted. Under present circumstances that means a veto to progress. The right course would be to say: I stick to Pakistan and every thing else that goes with it and I shall never be satisfied with less, but I am perfectly willing to join hands with others to push out the alien authority. After that I shall fight for my rights if necessary. It is clear that he wants present conditions to continue and his position thus becomes indefensible.

Fortunately the world is changing and our hardest problems are in a sense solving themselves through the clash of events. While the cultural approach is right and desirable, it takes time and events today rush past us and bring big changes before very long.

I do not know how far it is right for you, as a member of the Congress Working Committee, to suggest a *rapprochement* with Jinnah and the League on the lines you mention. This will no doubt create confusion and misunderstanding. Would it not be better for you to consult Maulana Azad? He is coming here tomorrow and will stay for three days or so. If you like I can give him your typescript.

I am making some suggestions below about relatively minor matters:

1. In the dedication there is an odd collection of names but it is for you to decide who is to be included.
 2. Page 2, lines 23-24 from top. To say that the Hindu money-lending class dominated nationalist politics appears to me to be entirely wrong. Even if Gandhiji is thought of as a bania, surely he is not in politics as a representative of the money-lending class and even his forebears did not indulge in this profession. I do not see the money-lending class having any real influence on our politics.³
 3. Page 4, line 9 from bottom—'render' seems to be the wrong word.
 4. Page 22, top line—Was not dancing expressly prohibited by Muslim tradition and custom?
 5. Page 24, second paragraph—It would be probably more correct to say that the political, economic and social structure of India was in process of active disruption when the British came. Their easy
3. Clarifying this point in his reply of 5 February 1942, Mahmud stated that he did not mean Mahatma Gandhi but the provincial leaders of the Congress. Most of the M.L.As. were money-lenders or were related to them. The request of Mahatma Gandhi to lower the interest rates had no effect at all.

success was due to this fact and later they encouraged this process in many ways.

6. Page 33, line 8 from top—The Theosophical Society was not a Hindu reform movement. It was started outside India by a Russian and an American.⁴ Later, it is true, it had a strong influence of a revivalist character on Hindus.
7. Page 60, lines 9, 10 from bottom—So far as I know Gandhiji was not a signatory to any request to Ramsay MacDonald.⁵
8. Page 68, lines 8, 9 from bottom—These figures are, I think, wholly incorrect.
9. Page 69, bottom and page 70, top. I do not know what you mean by saying that no plan of economic development, etc. was considered. Possibly some minor plans were not adopted. What they were I do not know. But the whole conception of the National Planning Committee as well as of the development of village industries, were from different approaches meant to tackle the problem of poverty and unemployment. Your statement ignores the extraordinary complexity of this problem and the impossibility of tackling it successfully within the present structure.
10. Page 76, third para—It is odd to say that the Muslims prepared the country to face the 20th century. As a governing power they ceased to exist in India in the 18th century, and even then both Muslims and Hindus were behind the times and so collapsed. Certain cultural accomplishments have nothing to do with the 20th century, which is represented by the spirit of science and industrial growth. We are nearly all—Hindus and Muslims—today somewhere in the 18th or early 19th century. Some are in the 15th or 16th century or even earlier. The Muslim League's attitude can only be understood in terms of the Middle Ages.

These are some odd suggestions for you to consider. I have not mentioned typing errors which sometimes occur.

4. The Theosophical Society was founded by Madame Blavatsky and Col. H.S. Olcott in the United States in 1875. They later came to India and established their headquarters at Madras. The Society became a great force in Indian life and politics after its protagonist Annie Besant came and settled in India in 1893.
5. During the Second Round Table Conference in 1931, which was attended by Mahatma Gandhi, certain Indian politicians had requested Ramsay MacDonald, the then British Prime Minister, to intervene and give a decision for the solution of the communal problem, since the parties involved could not agree among themselves. And when the decision was announced on 17 August 1932, Mahatma Gandhi protested against it by undertaking a fast unto death.

It is difficult to advise about publication. Any way do not expect much money out of it. It is not easy to get books published now owing to scarcity of paper and uncertainty due to war conditions. The only thing to do is to get a publisher to issue it on a royalty (say 15%) on the published price of each copy sold. Royalties thus depend entirely on sale. Kitabistan is in some ways very unreliable but on the whole they are to be preferred to others.

Yours affectionately,
Jawahar

4. To Syed Mahmud¹

Allahabad
7.2.1942

My dear Mahmud,

I have received your letter² and Mirza Ismail's foreword.³ I have also discussed the matter with Maulana. Maulana was of opinion that what you have written about the Congress ministries and even more so what you have suggested for the future is hardly in keeping with facts or with future possibilities. This would have been so anyhow, but for a member of the Congress Working Committee to write in this way is both extraordinary and harmful. Sir Mirza Ismail's foreword crystallizes your suggestions about the future and puts forward proposals which are certainly not the Congress proposals and which many of us are entirely opposed to.

This is Maulana's opinion and I wholly agree with him. I think you have been less than just to the Congress ministries in your survey and have emphasized certain aspects. But a difference of opinion of this kind need not come in the way of your publishing your book. What is more important is that you are a member of the Working Committee and were yourself a minister. Anything that you may say will inevitably be considered as representing the Working Committee however much you might dissociate yourself.

1. Syed Mahmud Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter of 5 February 1942, Syed Mahmud wrote that the caste system among the Hindus had a firm hold on the mind and worked in full vigour during the time of the Congress ministries.

3. Foreword to Syed Mahmud's book on Hindu-Muslim relations.

I am conveying to you Maulana's message. You are entirely wrong if you think that I do not attach importance to the Hindu-Muslim problem. Whatever my other failings might be, I am not stupid and I know the vital importance of this question. But my ways of dealing with it are different. I am tired of this pottering about and trying to please reactionaries and fools or those who belong to the upper strata. I want to treat the whole political and economic structure and build anew. There is going to be no going back, so far as I am concerned, to the old order in India whatever happens. It is absurd therefore for anyone to talk of ministries, composite or otherwise.

The date of Indu's wedding has not been fixed so far. Probably it will be in the last 10 days of March. It will take place in Allahabad.

About the publication of your book, I am not a good go-between for Kitabistan as I have not been on very cordial terms with them.

Love,

Yours affly.,
Jawahar

5. To Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan¹

Allahabad
June 12, 1942

Dear Mr. Inayatullah Khan,

Thank you for your telegram which I have received today.² I do not quite understand it. As you know we shall gladly do everything in our power to bring about a friendly settlement between the Congress and the Muslim League, as well as other organisations. The obvious way to bring this about is for representatives to discuss the matter. That is why the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, suggested some time ago that such representatives might be appointed on behalf of the Congress and the League. The number of the representatives is immaterial, though probably it will be better if there were several on each side. Before the Congress can take definite steps in the matter, it should know whether the Muslim League is agreeable to the suggestion made. From certain speeches made by the Muslim

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his telegram of 10 June 1942, he asked Jawaharlal to name one Congress representative immediately as Jinnah in all probability would agree to a single representative.

League leaders, it would appear that they are not agreeable. Your telegram is vague and it is difficult for any step to be taken till we have more definite and direct knowledge of the Muslim League attitude.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

6. To Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan¹

Allahabad
June 23, 1942

Dear Mr. Inayatullah Khan,
I have received your telegram in which you say that Mr. Jinnah desires the withdrawal of the Allahabad resolution before he can negotiate. Presumably this refers to the recent resolution of the All India Congress Committee relating to the unity of India.² That resolution merely confirmed the position for which the Congress has stood for 57 years now. Anyway nobody can withdraw it except the All India Congress Committee. Personally I would be against any change in that resolution as I think the Congress position relating to the unity of India is sound. Mr. Jinnah's suggestion that this resolution should be withdrawn is on a par with a suggestion I might make that the Muslim League resolution about Pakistan should be withdrawn. Such suggestions do not help either way. If people are prepared to talk over matters, they do not put forward conditions which in themselves are tantamount to decisions. The suggestion I made in Bombay and elsewhere was that people holding different views on this subject should, while adhering to their views, agree to cooperate on the basis of achieving the independence of India and the transfer of full political power to the representatives of the Indian people. Further they can cooperate then in the defence of a free India. After that they can consider the other questions that divide them and come to an understanding. This course of action does not commit anyone or compel him to give up his own particular point of view.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. See *ante*, pp. 276-285.

7. To Allama Mashriqi Inayatullah Khan¹

Wardha
July 8, 1942

Dear Mr. Inayatullah Khan,

I have your telegram. I think I have already made our position clear to you. The Congress ever since its inception has been based on the national unity of India. Without that idea of unity, the Congress fails of its purpose and might as well be wound up. The resolution passed by the All India Congress Committee in Allahabad in effect stated that the Congress should not agree to the break-up of that unity. This resolution may or may not have been necessary, but in effect it merely confirmed the old Congress position. To annul that resolution is to state to the world that the Congress is prepared to consider the division of India into two parts. That would be against the fundamental Congress position.

Apart from this, however, the Congress has stated that while it stands by the unity of India and considers any division fatal for all concerned, still it cannot think in terms of compelling any territorial unit to remain in an Indian Union against its declared emphatic will.

I have already told you that constitutionally speaking it is beyond our power to upset a resolution passed by the A.I.C.C. Only the A.I.C.C. or the full Congress can do that.

I think the position is quite clear. What I suggested to you previously was that the Congress and the Muslim League, as well as others, need not give up their particular positions or objectives but may still cooperate together for the independence and defence of India. What they must all decide is that they will not look up to the British Government for help in furthering their particular claims, as this is derogatory to the dignity of any Indian or any group in India. It is for us to settle these matters among ourselves without invoking foreign authority.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

8. Can Indians Get Together?¹

"Can Indians get together?" It is an odd title yet a significant one, for it tells us much in four words. It gives us an intimate and revealing glimpse into the minds of those who framed it. It reveals to us the premises and assumptions on which they base their consideration of the Indian problem. It displays that patronizing superiority of outlook which we have come to associate with Westerners when they deal with Eastern nations. It has something of the white man's burden about it. Because of all this I was disinclined to write on the subject, for there is little room for argument or reasoning when premises differ. Our minds function in set grooves, and if even the impact of a World War with its attendant revolutionary changes does not pull them out from those deep hollows, how much can we expect from an appeal to reason?

This War is a stupendous military spectacle, and all over the world armies, navies and air forces clash with each other and seek to gain the mastery....² These mighty conflicts already have changed the shape of the world and will undoubtedly still further change the shape of things to come. And yet greater changes are happening in the minds of men, possibly none so great as those invisible things that are affecting Asia and gradually but surely putting an end to the relations between Asia and Europe that subsisted for 200 years. However this War may develop, whatever the end may be, no matter what the peace is going to be, it is certain that the Western world can no longer dominate over Asia. If this is not realized and if the attempt is made to continue the old relationship in any form, this means the end of peace and another disastrous conflict.

Yet this is not realized by those who shape the policies of Western nations, least of all by Britain. The France of Vichy, grovelling before Germany, still talks of the French Empire,³ the Netherlands, having lost already many of her vast possessions, still speaks the offensive

1. Article written by Jawaharlal. Printed in *The New York Times Magazine*, 19 July 1942.

2. As in the source.

3. On 17 February 1941, an Imperial Committee was formed by the Vichy Government whose purpose was "to make known to all Frenchmen the grandeur of the Empire." In 1942 the Vichy Government from time to time claimed its Empire. In March 1942, it assured the Americans that the fate of Madagascar would not be the same as that of Indo-China.

language of Empire⁴ and endeavours to cling to what is left. The nineteenth century is dead and gone but the minds of Britain's rulers still think in terms of that past. That way lies no hope for the war or for the peace that must inevitably come some time or the other. Unless London and Washington begin to think in terms of today and of free and equal Asia they will never reach a solution of the problems that confront them.

That solution lies in accepting the fact of full and equal freedom for all the countries of Asia, of giving up the doctrine of racial superiority, which is no monopoly of the Nazis and which we in India have known in its most intense form for many generations. It lies in the recognition of Indian independence, which will not only release the suppressed and pent-up energies of a great nation but will be symbolic of a new freedom all over the world.

What a mess the nations of Europe made of this world with their perpetual conflicts, their eternal hates, their grabbing violence and cut-throat opportunism, with the misery they brought to their colonial territories, with two world wars in the course of a single generation!

Not being able to look after their own houses, they presume to dominate over others and pose as their mentors. But no one values them at their achievements in science, literature or the application of science. Behind all this there is a lack of something which brings their achievements periodically to nought. Asia has looked at this changing scene with the strength of ages behind her, and the past 200 years, with all their suffering and mortification, are but a brief interlude in her long history.

That interlude is over. A new chapter must begin. Asia is learning rapidly what the West has to teach of science and its applications and is trying to harmonize them with her old-time genius. She has little to learn, much to teach about the philosophy of life and the art of living.

Can the Indians get together? Yes, certainly, if impediments in their way created by foreign authority are removed, if they can face their problems without external interference. Every problem finally will be solved either by peaceful means or by conflict, though this may give rise to new problems. Independent India will solve her problems or cease to be. The past history of India shows us how she has successfully tackled her problems and out of every conflict of opposing forces has produced a new synthesis. Synthesis is a dominant trait of India's civilization and history.

4. The exiled Netherlands Government in London appointed, on 21 May 1942, Dr. H.J. Van Hook as Minister of Colonies.

Except for China, there is no great country in the world which has shown such powerful unity throughout the ages as India. That unity took political shape only recently as it could not be stabilized until relatively recent developments in transport and communications made this easy. If these developments had not taken place it is possible that the United States of America might not have been a single nation.

Britain's rule over India led to political unity and also was a means to bring the industrial revolution to India. Development of that revolution was, however, hindered by the British, who encouraged feudal elements and prevented industrial growth. The continuing process of synthesis also was stopped by this rule and disruptive forces were encouraged.

For the first time in India's history, here was the rule of a foreign people who had their political, financial, industrial and cultural roots elsewhere and who could only remain as foreigners exploiting the country for their own advantage. There could be no synthesis with them, and perpetual conflict was inevitable. Yet out of this very conflict rose the powerful all-India nationalist movement, which became and is the symbol of political unity.

Independence, democracy and unity were the pillars of this movement. In accordance with old Indian traditions toleration, fullest protection and autonomy were promised to all minorities, subject only to the essential unity of the country and to the democratic basis of its constitution. Independence meant severance from the British Empire, but in the new world it was realized that isolated national existence was not possible or desirable. So India was prepared to join any international federation on an equal basis. But that could come only after recognition of her independence and through her free will. There could be no compulsion. In particular, India wanted to associate herself closely with China.

There is now a demand on the part of some Muslims, represented by the Muslim League, for partition of India, and it must be remembered that this demand is a very recent one, hardly four years old. It must also be remembered that there is a large section of Muslims in India who oppose it. Few people take it seriously, as it has no political or economic background. Americans who fought the Civil War to keep their Union together can appreciate how a proposal to divide the country is resented by vast numbers of the Indian people.

Thirty years ago the British Government introduced the principle of separate religious electorates in India, a fatal thing which has come in the way of development of political parties. Now they have tried to introduce the idea of partitioning India, not only into two but possibly

many separate parts. This was one of the reasons which led to bitter resentment of the Cripps proposals. The All India Congress could not agree to this, yet it went far and said if any territorial unit clearly declared its desire to break away, the Congress could not think in terms of compelling it to stay in the Union.

So far as minorities are concerned, it is accepted and common ground that they should be given fullest constitutional protection, religious, cultural, linguistic and in every other way. Backward minorities or classes should in addition be given special educational and other privileges to bring them rapidly to the general level.

The real problem so often referred to is that of the Muslims. They are hardly a minority, as they number about 90,000,000, and it is difficult to see how even a majority can oppress them. As it happens, they are largely concentrated in particular provinces. It is proposed to give full provincial autonomy to every province, reserving only certain all-India subjects for the central government, and this will give every opportunity for self-development in each cultural area. Indeed, there may even be smaller autonomous cultural areas within the province.

It is possible to devise many ways to give satisfaction to every conceivable minority claim. The Congress has said this must be done by agreement, not by a majority vote. If agreement is not possible on any point, then impartial arbitration should be accepted. Finally, if any territorial unit insists on breaking away after the experience of working in the Union, there is going to be no compulsion to force it to stay, provided such severance is geographically possible.

It must be remembered that the problem of Indian minorities is entirely different from nationalities with entirely different racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This is not so in India where, except for a small handful of persons, there is no difference between Hindu and Muslim in race, culture or language. The vast majority of Muslims belong to the same stock as the Hindus and were converted to Islam.

Few problems in the world today are basically so simple of solution as the Indian minority problem. For various reasons it is important today and comes in the way of progress, yet it is essentially a superficial problem without deep roots. The real problems of India are economic, the poverty and low standards. As soon as these are tackled aggressively, as they should be, and modern industry grows, bringing higher standards in its train, the minority problem fades away. It has been a product of unemployment of the middle classes who had few avenues of work open to them and looked for employment to the state. As state jobs were limited, demand rose for reservation of these for particular communities.

Every attempt to solve the problem thus far has failed because there was always a third party—the British Government. If that government fades away, the whole background of this problem changes when Indians have to look to themselves. Compulsion of events forces them to face reality and to come to agreement. The only alternative is conflict, which everyone is anxious to avoid, over a relatively trivial issue. But even if there is conflict, that is preferable to the present stalemate, and it will produce a solution.

The All India Congress proposal has been that this and other problems should be considered and finally decided by a constituent assembly elected by adult franchise. The widest franchise is considered necessary, for the consideration of these questions should rest on those vast numbers of people who are far more interested in economic problems and who do not look for state employment.

Such economic problems cut across religious boundaries and are common to Hindu, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist. If such an assembly could not come to an agreement on any particular minority matters they could be referred to international arbitration. We are perfectly prepared to abide by the decision of such an international tribunal in such matters. But the question of arbitration does not arise over the question of independence. That and the allied questions of self-determination must be recognized and accepted before there is a possibility of arbitration over minor matters. On independence we cannot compromise.

Can the Indians get together? I have no doubt that they can and they will. Even today there is an amazing unity of outlook among them and whatever their internal differences might be they stand for independence. The real obstacle in the way of real unity and progress is foreign domination. From every point of view it has become an urgent and immediate necessity that Britain should relinquish her hold in India and recognize Indian independence. There is no other way and it is certain, whether Britain likes it or not, that India must be given complete independence.

The approach of war to India has made this an even more vital question. Independent India would treat America and Britain as allies in a common enterprise to release her vast energy and resources against every aggressor who invaded her territory. But Indians can no longer function as slaves and underlings in their own country or outside or tolerate being treated as chattels by dominant foreign authority. Submission to this is for them the worst kind of spiritual degradation.

The East will put up with it no longer. Asia will come back to her own through whatever travail and suffering fate may have in store for

her. China has poured out her heart's blood in defence of her freedom. India would do likewise if the opportunity came to her to fight for her freedom. She seeks no dominion over others, but she will put up with no dominion over herself. Only independence will release her from long bondage and allow her to play her part fittingly in the terrible drama of the world today.

9. To K. G. Gagai¹

Allahabad
July 27, 1942

Dear friend,²

I have received your postcard of the 23rd.³ I have also received other letters on the same subject. It is not true that I have paid no attention to these communications. I have in fact sent several letters to Allama Mashriqi telling him how anxious and eager we are to come to some settlement in India with the Muslim League and other organisations. But a settlement cannot be made by one party. We have gone very far indeed in our attempts but the response we have received from the Muslim League leaders has made any settlement at present impossible. We cannot give up the very basis of our existence as a nationalist organization, believing in the freedom and unity of India. Short of that we are prepared to go to any length. I have written to Allama Mashriqi repeatedly on this subject.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Resident of Junagadh.

3. In his letter he accused Jawaharlal of paying no heed to the Khaksar leader's appeal for a settlement between the Congress and the League.

10. To Amaranatha Jha¹

Allahabad
28/7/1942

My dear Amaranatha,²

You have put me a difficult question.³ Not so difficult so far as I am concerned but difficult for me to think or act in your terms. I think this flag question has been bungled by both the University authorities and the Union. You are right in placing some of the blame at least on the Union people for their delaying tactics. A clear decision taken at an early stage would have helped matters greatly.

Sometimes, though infrequently, students have come to me for advice and I have had talks with them. But on the whole I have had little to do with developments and have often not known about them.

I understand that there has been a definite understanding and assurance that the national flag can be put up on the University buildings on certain days in the year. But these days were not definitely fixed up or specified, although the principal anniversaries are well known.

I was deeply grieved to learn, when I was in Delhi, that you had given permission for the Muslim League flag to be put up on the Senate House. This seemed to me a definitely wrong thing. I could

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1897-1955); son of Ganganatha Jha; Vice-Chancellor, Allahabad University, 1938-1947, and Banaras Hindu University, 1948; Chairman, Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission, 1947-1953; and of Bihar Public Service Commission, 1953-1955.
3. Some Muslim students took exception to the hoisting of the tricolour flag in the absence of a national flag by the Students Union and requested the Vice-Chancellor either to allow the Muslim League flag also to be hoisted or stop the Students Union from hoisting the tricolour flag. The Vice-Chancellor requested the Students Union for an explanation, in the absence of which in April 1942, he allowed the Muslim League flag to be hoisted. This was resented by the Students Union, which decided to organise resistance against this. Since some Muslim League leaders were invited to attend the flag hoisting which was against the agreement with the Vice-Chancellor that outsiders would not be called, permission to hold the meeting was withheld and the police was called in. Thereafter only the college flag was allowed to be hoisted.

have understood, though I might have disagreed with it, your asking students not to put up any flag. But a communal flag, which openly and brazenly represents a small communal group only, can never be tolerated on a University building. A class flag, such as the red flag, ought also not to be allowed, but even the red flag is better than a communal flag. When that communal flag has come to represent antipathy to the whole conception of India and Hindustan, it is still more objectionable.

Considering the matter objectively, as far as I can, and apart from the passions involved, I would have officially on behalf of the University given every facility to the students to put up any flag they chose, provided it was not a communal or class flag. Personally, if I had been the Vice-Chancellor, I would have tried to get the University Executive Council to adopt the national flag. But even if it that was not done officially, for all practical purposes this flag would have been used.

But obviously this question cannot be considered objectively now as too much passion is involved. It is perfectly clear that the Muslim League flag cannot be put up as this is bound to lead to trouble with 80% or more of the students. So both on theoretical and practical grounds every communal flag must be ruled out. On this there should be no weakening.

As for the national flag, I think your old understanding that it can be put up on certain days might well remain, subject to this, that if untoward consequences are apprehended on a particular occasion, the Vice-Chancellor may ask the students or the Union not to put it up on that occasion. This is rather a feeble sort of thing to say and it might even be an invitation to trouble and the creation of those very untoward consequences. But looking at it from your point of view I do not see any other way out. To say now that no flag should be put up on any occasion will itself give rise to trouble.

There is another aspect of the matter. Possibly there will be no occasion to put up the national flag in the near future. Before such an occasion arises, much may have happened in the country upsetting our normal routine. This flag issue may well be absorbed in wider issues and lose its importance. These other issues might well give us headaches, but there will be no need for worrying over the flag.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

11. To Abdul Latif¹

Bombay
August 6, 1942

Dear Mr. Abdul Latif,

I have your letter of today's date.² You have informed me that you have written a similar letter to the Congress President and you have been good enough to tell me of his reply. It is hardly necessary for me to add anything to Maulana Azad's reply which is fully authoritative. I need only say, if I may venture to do so, that I wholly agree with it.

The Congress position in regard to the proposal to divide up India into two or more parts is that any such division will be exceedingly harmful to both parts as well as to India as a whole. I am personally convinced that probably our Muslim friends in the north west of India will suffer most from such a division. India, as it is, contains nearly all the important elements and resources that can make her a strong and more or less self-sufficient nation. To cut her up will be, from the economic point of view as well as others, a fatal thing breaking up that natural economic unity and weakening each part. The north will suffer most from this because it is industrially not so advanced, nor does it contain some of the essential raw materials that are so necessary for a modern nation. There are many other arguments against division but I need not go into them as you are well aware of them yourself. There are of course also the sentimental, historical and psychological arguments which, as you know, affect the people powerfully. It is for all these reasons that there is a very strong feeling amongst us and, we believe, amongst vast numbers of people in India against any division of India. All these arguments are reinforced by recent world history and in fact by the course of the war itself. This

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter Latif stated that the Congress Working Committee in rejecting the Cripps proposal, in its resolution, had accepted in principle not to compel any territory to remain in India against its will. The A.I.C.C. while endorsing this resolution in May 1942, had accepted Jagat Narain Lal's proposal rejecting Rajagopalachari's resolution accepting Pakistan in principle. Latif asked Jawaharlal which interpretation was correct. He further asked whether the representatives appointed by the Muslim League for talks with the Congress would be allowed to discuss "any proposals they might put forward for a permanent settlement of the communal problem."

has shown that small nations have no future before them except as hangers-on of larger nations. We do not want India, or any part of India, to be such a hanger-on, or a kind of semi-colonial dependency, political or economic, of any other nation. In fact the tendency in the world is for larger federations to come into existence. Personally I am convinced that the ultimate solution will lie in a world federation and I am happy that a lead towards this has been given in the resolution that is going to be placed before the All India Congress Committee tomorrow.³ Such a world federation will help in the solution of many vital problems and, among others, even the problem of national or other minorities will take a different shape.

In the resolution referred to above you will also find the Congress position in regard to a federation clearly defined. It is stated that India should have a federal government with the largest possible autonomy for the federating units, and further that residuary powers should vest in these federating units. Personally I must confess to you that I am not enamoured of this as I think the modern tendency is against it and rightly so. It is essential today to have a planned economy for the nation, and for this as well as for defence, etc. a strong central government is necessary. Nevertheless we have agreed to this to meet the wishes of many of our friends who consider it important. I might add that this is no new decision of the Congress as a similar decision was arrived at eleven years ago.

Thus, generally speaking, the Congress stands firmly for the unity of India and a federation with a greater autonomy for the units. For this objective it works. Nevertheless at Delhi it made it perfectly clear that if any territorial unit was emphatically and clearly of the opinion that it should break with the Indian Union, it should not be compelled to act contrary to its wishes. Naturally this would not be welcomed by us and it would inevitably depend on certain geographical and other factors. That decision of the Congress Working Committee stands and nothing has been said or done to modify or vary it in any way. When Babu Jagat Narain Lal's resolution came at the A.I.C.C. meeting in Allahabad, this was made perfectly clear by the Congress President, by me and by others. The wording of that resolution expresses the general wish and policy of the Congress which has been the basis of our constitution and working ever since the Congress came into existence. There is nothing really new in it. This resolution does not in any way override the Delhi Working Committee's resolution. This is perfectly clear and beyond doubt.

3. See *ante*, pp. 436-453.

Of course if representatives of the Congress and the Muslim League meet together they are free to discuss any matter and to refer such matters as they choose to their parent bodies for decision.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

THE INDIAN STATES

1. Message to the Indore Rajya Praja Mandal Conference¹

I send my good wishes to the conference that is being held in Indore under the auspices of the Praja Mandal.² The question of the Indian states is today more than ever a part of the larger question of India. Indeed the problem of India itself is a part of the larger problem of the world. But whatever may happen in the international field, it is absolutely clear that the fate of the states is bound up with the rest of India. In these stirring and revolutionary times everyone who is connected with the states, whether he is the ruler or the minister or the average man in the street, or shop or field or factory, must think in terms of the bigger issues that confront us.

We may not of course forget our day-to-day problems in each state, for they affect the life of the people and a satisfactory solution of them leads often to the solution of the larger problem. Nevertheless it is the larger problem of the whole Indian states system that is before us and that must be borne in mind. We have seen in the past two years proud empires being battered and defeated in war, we see today other empires being shaken up and possibly on the verge of dissolution. It is absurd, under these circumstances, to talk the petty language of petty reforms which still finds favour in the Indian states, as it does in the minds of the British authorities in the rest of India. The time for that is long past and those events outpaced them, and the reins of authority automatically drop from their hands.

Therefore it is necessary for all people concerned to take heed, to look into this changing present, to envisage the coming future, and to seek to adapt themselves to it as rapidly and as completely as possible.

It is well known that in the states as in the rest of India the British Governmental apparatus comes in the way. But that apparatus is already in the process of dissolution and we shall have to look to ourselves and rely on our own united wisdom and strength. Ultimately the good of the people depends on the strength and self-reliance of those people and not on benefits conferred upon them by authority.

I trust that the people of Indore state, as well as the people of all states, will take this larger view and grow in organisation, self-reliance

1. Bardoli, 30 December 1941. Only extracts were printed in the newspapers on 15 February 1942. We are giving here the full text from the J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Held at Malidpur on 13 February 1942.

and strength. I hope that they will avoid entanglement in petty questions and seek that larger good of all. I hope also that the authorities of the state will align themselves with this larger good and help in the development of strength and self-reliance among the people.

To the workers of the Praja Mandal I should like to say that if they seek to serve the people, they must develop the qualities of true servants of the public. They must be true and brave and self-reliant, not seeking personal preferment or advantage, not mixing themselves in party strife and petty squabbles, but always endeavouring to secure the goodwill of the people through disinterested service.

I send my good wishes again to the conference and through it to the people of Indore.

2. To Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah¹

Allahabad
January 7, 1942

My dear Sheikh Abdullah,

I received your letter at Bardoli. But I have unfortunately misplaced it.

I was deeply grieved to learn of your brother's death. Of course you could not come to Bardoli for the Standing Committee meeting. I did not expect you to undertake this long journey at this time of the year, more especially after your bereavement.

I should of course like to meet you as there are so many things to discuss both in regard to Kashmir and larger questions relating to India.

Everything seems to be in a state of flux. The question of the states, important as it is, recedes somewhat in the background before the larger question of the whole of India. That larger question itself is governed by world developments. I suppose ultimately we all sink or swim together. More and more I feel that we must not allow ourselves to lose sight of the really big questions and get entangled in smaller issues. The future is uncertain, but it is quite certain that we shall have to play our part in shaping that future. The real question before us therefore is that we should be ready and prepared to play that part.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

The Standing Committee meeting discussed chiefly various administrative matters and internal difficulties that had arisen. No final decision has yet been taken.

With all good wishes to you and other friends in Kashmir.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To The Law Member, Bhopal¹

Bombay
January 27, 1942

Dear Sir,

I have received your D.O. No. 10622 dated the 17th January.² I have learnt with surprise and regret that the Government of Bhopal were unable to permit an interview with Mr. Shakir Ali Khan³ and others at present confined in the Bhopal Jail. My request was a very simple one and had nothing to do with political conversations during the interview. It was a request which is often made in regard to prisoners and which, so far as I am concerned, has never been refused to me anywhere, whether it related to a political prisoner or to a non-political prisoner. I can only conclude that the Government of Bhopal is run on lines which are peculiar to itself and which have little in common with other administrations. A jail interview for the purpose of inquiring about the personal health and condition of a prisoner is the most ordinary of courtesies. Perhaps you are unaware of the fact that in many countries jail rules permit almost an unlimited number of interviews because it is considered essential that the prisoner should make as many human contacts as possible with the outside world.

I was aware of the fact that Mr. Shakir Ali Khan had been tried and convicted by a court of law. I am also aware of the fact that I have been convicted many times of so-called non-political offences and that it is a common practice for political workers to be so convicted. Mr. Shakir Ali Khan has been a political worker for sometime and has come

1. A.I.S.P.C. Papers, File No. 4, Bhopal State, N.M.M.L.
2. Jawaharlal was informed that he could not interview Shakir Ali Khan because the latter was not a political prisoner but an ordinary convict.
3. (1904-1978); freedom fighter and journalist; active worker of the Communist Party of India; member, Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly, 1957-77.

into contact with me in that capacity. I am naturally interested in him as well as his work.

It is, however, immaterial whether you consider him a political prisoner or a non-political prisoner. In either event, I take it, that he has certain human rights which even prison should not deprive him of.

I am thankful to you for Colonel Rahman's report.⁴ From this report it appears that Mr. Shakir Ali Khan has been very ill for a considerable period, having suffered from malaria and typhoid continuously and having lost a good deal of weight. No doubt this is natural, as Colonel Rahman observes. It would equally be natural for a prisoner to die after severe illness, yet this would not be a satisfying explanation to those interested in him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. S.A. Rahman, Chief Medical Officer and Secretary to the Government of Bhopal in the Medical Department.

4. Individual Satyagraha in Benares State¹

During my visit to Benares I met workers of the Benares State Congress and they told me of the happenings in the state during the past year or more when I was in prison. Before I went to prison I had followed the developments in the state and noticed with regret the progressively reactionary character of the administration especially after the death of the late Maharaja.² It appears that this deterioration continued and even the assurances given by the state authorities were not honoured and therefore the State Congress started individual satyagraha.³ This satyagraha has now continued for over eight months and is still continuing.

I do not wish to deal in this statement with the many questions that have arisen. They demonstrated not only the essential evils of the states system but the additional evils of the Political Department of the

1. Message to the Benares State Congress Committee which met on 31 January 1942. *National Herald*, 4 February 1942.
2. Maharaja Sir Aditya Narain Singh (1874-1939).
3. It was started in May 1941.

Government of India controlling these states directly through its own officers. Bad as all this is, it will no doubt be swept away in the big changes that must inevitably come soon. For the present we must not concern ourselves too much with the smaller issues and must think and act in terms of the larger issues.

I therefore recommend to the State Congress to discontinue the individual satyagraha that they have been carrying on. This is especially desirable as Mahatma Gandhi has for the present discontinued satyagraha in India. All workers must concentrate on the important work ahead—organisational and the constructive programme. By doing this they will prepare themselves for the greater tasks ahead and will strengthen their own people.

5. A Note on Rewa¹

No responsible person can consider any question in a kind of vacuum as if it was an isolated affair. A students' debating society might give its opinion theoretically in this way because it is not concerned either with the carrying out of any programme or with the various consequences and reactions that flow from it. Therefore the Rewa affair² cannot be considered independently but only in relation to the general policy of the Congress, its present programme, and the national and international situation. Nothing should be done there which is against Congress principles or which comes in the way of our wider programme.

We know that the Political Department is chiefly concerned with the political aspects of the states and their subservience to the Government of India. Bad government, oppression of the people and immorality of the rulers do not worry the Political Department greatly. There are numerous examples of rulers who are thoroughly bad, incompetent and corrupt and who are still supported by the Political Department. But if a ruler is likely to be at all independent-minded and not amenable

1. Allahabad, 6 March 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Maharaja Sir Gulab Singhju Dev Bahadur (1903–1946); who became Ruler of Rewa State in 1922, was suspended by the British Government in February 1942 and this led to considerable excitement and agitation in the state. He was charged with involvement in certain criminal offences which were of such a grave nature that the government decided to refer the case to a Commission of Enquiry. But the Maharaja refused to acquiesce in any such independent enquiries.

to the Political Department's discipline, then he gets into trouble. Thus the motives and activities of the Political Department are always suspect.

At the same time rulers, except some very rare examples, can claim little sympathy. There may be shades of gray as between them, but generally speaking they have been, and are, autocratic, oppressive, wasteful, corrupt and leading very undesirable personal lives. Apart from this personal aspect, the whole Indian states system is thoroughly bad and we are wholly committed to a complete change of it. Our policy has been, in regard to the larger states, that there should be full responsible government and the ruler may remain as a constitutional head.

It thus becomes very difficult for us to support the personal cause of a ruler, unless there are very exceptional circumstances which have resulted in joining that personal cause with the larger national or people's cause. Even then one has to be careful not to do anything which directly or indirectly supports the states system and encourages a mentality among the people of accepting a feudal order. The whole objective of our past work and propaganda has been to develop a mentality among the people in favour of freedom and self-rule, and against subservience to ruling chiefs or British officers. We cannot and should not do any thing which might militate against this, or otherwise a small present gain may have to be set off by a more fundamental loss.

Above all we must remember that we are face to face today with vital and far-reaching problems, the solution of which will affect our country and the world. The Rewa affair is very unimportant in relation to these and we must not exaggerate it or lose our sense of perspective. Whatever attitude we may adopt in regard to it must be within the larger context and in conformity with the national policy.

The Congress cannot allow itself to become the tool of either the Political Department or of the Maharaja and his supporters. If it does either, it loses its commanding position and becomes a faction in a relatively minor dispute. Leading Congressmen must therefore keep apart from these factions and give a correct lead.

I can give no opinion about the good or bad qualities of the Maharaja. Possibly he is a little better than many of his brother princes, but that is not saying much. Possibly he has been less oppressive than some other rulers. But obviously he has not been a paragon of virtue as a man or a ruler and, either because of his own inclinations or because of pressure from the Political Department, has tried to crush the Congress and popular movements in the state. Latterly, I believe, he has functioned in a somewhat better way.

When a demand is made for an inquiry into grave charges, it is difficult and unwise to refuse it or to condemn it. It was unwise for

the Maharaja to refuse it. Obviously the Congress cannot say that there should be no inquiry. All it can say is that such an inquiry must be thoroughly impartial and just.

For the Congress the right position is to point out what it stands for in regard to the states, that is, responsible government; that it has sought to change the present autocratic powers of the ruler in favour of popular rule; that at the same time it is aware that many of the evils of the states system are due to the policy of the Political Department; that to change the autocracy of the ruler for the bureaucracy of the Political Department is to jump from the frying pan into the fire; that the real question at issue should be the introduction of popular rule and responsible government; that any action taken by the Political Department is suspect; that it neither wants the administration to be run by the Political Department or its nominees nor a reversion to the Maharaja's autocratic rule; that is so far as any serious charges are made against the Maharaja an impartial inquiry may be made but the popular element should be represented on it; that the real work for the people is to organize themselves for self-sufficiency and self-defence against unsocial elements according to the directions of the Congress. The last named is the essential work for today; all else is secondary.

It should be remembered that it will be unwise for the Congress or for noted Congressmen to create an impression in the mind of the people that they are just members of the Maharaja's party anxious to get him back as he was. It will also be unwise for them to give the impression that they are backing or supporting the Political Department. The Congress is above both and stands for the people. It should express its opinion on the issues raised and then concentrate its activity on the constructive side of our work.

6. The Indian States and the Treaties¹

No treaty can be recognized which goes against human rights. The question of the states cannot be treated as a secondary matter which

1. Speech at the Kerala Club, New Delhi, 6 April 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 7 April 1942.

can be put aside for the present simply because the British Government had entered into treaties years ago. How can there be any satisfactory solution of the Indian problem if a large chunk of India—the states—is not considered? During the last 150 years there have been big revolutions—all manner of upheavals—changing the face of Europe. Here in India, owing to the artificial situation created by the British power, conditions have remained practically the same in the states. Anyone who says that nothing can be done because of treaties entered into 150 years ago is a lunatic, a knave or a fool.

This War is going to change the face of things completely. Political and economic conditions existing today cannot continue, for new adjustments will have to be made. I cannot say how, but no power on earth can stop it. In Europe, several treaties had been torn up. It is amazing effrontery to suggest that things which had ceased to exist in other countries should continue here. And, then, there is the human aspect—no treaty can be recognized which goes against human rights.

The Indian states' problem is the essence of the whole problem in India. What happens to the Indian states—that I regard as the ultimate test. If one wants the real picture of a city, it is not enough to look at the palaces alone—one has to see the slums also and also the conditions there. If, in considering the Indian problem, we leave the states it will not be a complete picture.

Travancore is an advanced state. But the fundamental test is the measure of political and economic power which the people possess. The progress of the states depends on the people becoming self-reliant, upon their having power and knowing how to use it. This is the test—not mere efficiency of the administration.

This is a strange land. Many strange things happen in this country. In this strange mixture of the odd and peculiar, nothing is so odd and peculiar as those who constitute the Government of India. They do not seem to realise that there is a war on. Intellectually they may be aware of it, but they have not shown themselves emotionally aware—by the way they deal with problems, even war problems. It is a matter for the psychoanalyst—the inefficiency of the Government of India. Why do they not realize their duty even when danger is facing them? This may involve them in difficulties. Instead of finding solutions for old problems, they are faced with new problems. But these difficulties, after all, may help to purge them, to purify and strengthen them. They have to pay the price for the future.

I am not going to submit to any conception which destroys the unity of India. It is not a matter for new logic—this emotional conception of India is something which we have to fight for. See the presence in

the gathering of Dr. Khan Sahib from the Khyber Pass, of Mr. Thanu Pillai² from Cape Comorin, of myself who came of Kashmir stock. This illustrates the essential unity of India—from the northern vastness to the southern seas.

Each particular state must bear its own burden—though they can expect sympathy. They must be prepared to face these problems and not wait for others.

2. Pattom Thanu Pillai, Chief Minister of Travancore, 1948; Chief Minister of Travancore-Cochin, 1954; Chief Minister of Kerala, 1960-62; Governor of Punjab, 1962-64; Governor of Andhra Pradesh, 1964-68; died 1970.

7. Jodhpur¹

While mighty armies march to and fro, and the fates of empires hang in the balance, significant happenings are taking place in the heart of Rajputana. In Jodhpur, the government of the state has launched a mighty offensive against the Lok Parishad. Jodhpur is of course an Indian state but lest anyone should imagine that Indians govern an Indian state, it should be stated that the Prime Minister is a Britisher, Sir Donald Field,² and he is supported by numerous other Britishers in the state service. The representatives of British democracy and lovers of freedom control this Indian state and its activities.

In 1938, the Marwar Lok Parishad was started and this immediately became the head of a popular movement for the redress of all manner of feudal cesses and impositions. The Lok Parishad, of course, stood for responsible government but, in effect, it concentrated on protecting the people from the many exactions made upon them, some of which had actually been declared illegal by the courts. It came into conflict with the feudal regime and the Parishad was declared illegal and many of its members were sent to prison. In spite of intensive repression, the Parishad carried on and there was some compromise with the state government. During the municipal elections that followed the Parishad gained a clear majority.

Again, the Parishad has come into conflict with the state authorities because of its attempt to save the people from forced exactions by the jagirdars and others. Every attempt to get these exactions stopped by

1. Editorial in *National Herald*, 6 June 1942.

2. Sir Donald Mayle Field (1881-1956); Chief Minister of Jodhpur, 1935-46.

the state had failed and the Maharaja³ would not even grant an interview to the leader of the Parishad to discuss these matters. Again, Shri Jainarain Vyas and many of his colleagues are in prison and the state officials are carrying on the war for democracy with full vigour against the people of the state.

These incidents, small as they are, reveal the nature of the British Government in India and how it functions through the states, resisting all attempts at reform and preserving their feudal structure. It is extraordinary that even the decisions of the courts declaring the various cesses illegal are not given effect to. This is an extraordinary state of affairs and our sympathy must go to those unhappy people who have to put up with this kind of British-supported feudal regime. Our demand for complete independence is the only possible demand, for there is no other way to put an end to these monstrous happenings in India.

3. Sir Umaid Singhji Sahib Bahadur (1903-1947); became ruler in 1918.

8. To Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah¹

Allahabad
July 29, 1942

My dear Sheikh Sahab,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd July. I am sorry you will not be able to come to Bombay for our Standing Committee meeting.² I quite realise that the situation in Kashmir itself must demand your presence. But the all-India situation and the world situation is of a very critical character. You must have no doubt followed this. It seems inevitable that both in regard to India and the world far-reaching developments will take place. - This will of course affect Kashmir also.

I have read with interest the resolutions of the Kashmir National Conference.

Indira and Feroze have been telling me all about their experience in Kashmir and of all your help and kindness to them. They fully enjoyed this. Of course they only saw a small part of Kashmir. One cannot

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. The Standing Committee of the All India States People's Conference was to meet at Bombay on 7-8 August 1942.

exhaust Kashmir even after many visits. I hope they will go there again and I hope next time I may be with them.

With all good wishes to you and to our other friends.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

9. The States People and the 'Quit India' Resolution¹

The Standing Committee of the All India States People's Conference meeting at a time of peril from outside and threatened upheaval within the country, has given the most earnest consideration to the problems facing it and the nation. It is manifest that the fate of the states is indissolubly linked with the fate of India and the peril of India is equally the peril of the states. So also must an upheaval in India affect the states. This companionship in peril must lead to an even richer companionship in the days of peaceful progress to come. Danger and peril have thus demonstrated afresh the unity of India and the comradeship of the people of the states with their brethren in the rest of India.

The Committee is convinced that in this hour of grave crisis for the motherland and the world the people of the states must stand shoulder to shoulder with the rest of India and face together the trials and tribulations of the struggle for freedom. It appeals, therefore, to the people of the states to line up with those who stand for the freedom of India; and likewise it makes appeal to the rulers of the states to discard ancient and discarded notions of autocracy and, recognising the people's right to govern themselves, become the real leaders of a free people. The time has come, and there is no denying it, when India must be a free and independent country, and the states should have full responsible government.

The Committee respectfully welcomes the lead given to the country by All India Congress Committee and calls upon the people of the states to carry out the directions issued by Mahatma Gandhi in so far as they are applicable to them.

The Committee expects all Praja Mandals to activate themselves, strengthen their organisation, and work for the programme of self-sufficiency and self-protection; and thus to prepare for the harder task ahead.

1. Resolution of the All India States People's Conference drafted by Jawaharlal, Bombay, 8 August 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE

1. Cottage and Large-Scale Industries¹

I am afraid of Guptaji,² who is always after me for one thing or the other. I was on my way to Allahabad, after being released from jail, and broke my journey here at Lucknow for a few hours. Guptaji forced me to pay a visit to the exhibition, and I was in a fix. It is not that I am nervous or afraid of delivering speeches, but I did not wish to speak all of a sudden, after such a long interval. My friends and colleagues are here at Lucknow and I wanted to use this opportunity to meet them and exchange views with them before making a speech.

I have been asked to speak on cottage industry. Cottage industry is an important problem but there are problems more important than cottage industry. These problems are affecting the whole world and if we are not prepared to face them they will crush us.

I am not a war-monger nor do I wish that this savage War should come to this country and its cities, but I sincerely tell you that I shall not be aggrieved if a few bombs are dropped on the Indian cities. This will open your eyes and you will then understand the issues facing the country.

Nowhere in the world are people more industrious than in China. A little over two years ago when I went to China, I saw the courage and resolution of the people there who were ready to lay down their lives for the sake of their country. Since then they have risen in my estimation. War has been going on in China for about five years. Calamities have been befalling them and their houses have been ruined but they are still fighting bravely. But at the same time they are building up a new China.

Their schools, colleges and universities are no more in existence but they have not given up education. Instead, the war has given the Chinese Government an impetus and a new vision to spread education into the remotest corners of their country. They have moved their educational centres to the interior. They quickly constructed mud huts and fitted them with whatever equipment they could get. This has, incidentally, galvanised them into action in the realm of education.

1. Speech at the All India Khadi and Industrial Exhibition, Lucknow, 7 December 1941. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India; and also from *National Herald*, 8 December 1941.

2. C.B. Gupta.

Thus instead of any setback to education the war has given encouragement to education. In this connection we should not forget the educational efforts of the Republican Government of Spain also during the war.

The Japanese war machine has destroyed Chinese cities, their factories, their buildings, their machinery and their economy. The Japanese blockade is complete. If the Chinese had not revived their cottage industries to fight the import of Japanese manufactures in Chinese villages, China would have been defeated. The revival of cottage industries has saved the Chinese people from the economic slavery of Japan. And this they have done admirably.

When I visited China, there were about 30,000 Chinese industrial cooperatives. There every village has a cooperative society of its own. So intensive and well-organised is the cooperative movement, that even in the Japanese occupied territories, cooperative societies continue to function. In fact, these cooperatives have given a democratic basis to the Chinese economy. In every village democracy is being evolved. Such is the effect of the Japanese bombs on China. Indians should take a lesson from China.

Cottage industries have their own importance in the economic life of a country, and they are rather indispensable in India. The poverty of India cannot be removed without reviving the cottage industries. I remember a talk I had with an agent of Ford's who had supplied a large number of tractors to Russia. The agent said that while Russia could make use of so many tractors, there was hardly any space for even one tractor to stand in some parts of Bengal. India is so thickly populated.

I am in favour of large-scale industry and I am convinced that India can solve her problems of production, distribution and unemployment with the help of big industries. We have very limited capital at our disposal, and it should not be spent in manufacturing articles which can easily be produced in the villages. People fear that owing to unequal distribution of wealth, big machines and large-scale industrialisation would lead to unemployment and other troubles. Such a situation arises only when distribution is not equitable. Therefore we have to ensure that wealth is not accumulated in the hands of a few but is distributed equitably.

We have to bear in mind that our large-scale industries do not ruin our cottage industries, because the problems of poverty and unemployment can be solved only by developing cottage industries. We should produce everything needed in India ourselves.

2. The Gandhi Ashram of Meerut¹

The importance of village industries, and more especially khadi, requires no proof today. Whatever advance industrialization on a big machine scale may be made in India, the growth of village industries is essential to tackle the vast problem of unemployment and under-employment and to produce a balanced economy for the nation. In India with her enormous population, underfed and without the prime necessities of life and often destitute and on the verge of starvation, conditions are different from those prevailing in small industrialized communities and sparsely populated areas. These conditions are more comparable to those in China. In both these great countries the human factor and the full utilization of the enormous human resources available is even more important than elsewhere. The production of additional wealth is essential to remove poverty but it is equally essential that this process should be accompanied by fairer distribution, and should not result in aggravation of poverty and unemployment for large numbers of people. The solution therefore lies in the widespread development of village industries in the country.

If this was so in peace time it is still more obvious in war time when the old economy is being shattered to pieces. Modern war even more than peace requires widespread production on a small scale which cannot be upset by some disaster or untoward development. We have seen how in China, during her war with Japan, village industries have sprung up everywhere and flourish even behind the Japanese lines. These have given a stability to Chinese economy which it could not have possessed otherwise and helped enormously in strengthening the people of China.

Our past twenty years' experience and conviction have thus been greatly strengthened by recent developments both in India and abroad.

The charkha and khadi have been and are the centre of village industry. From them radiate other village industries and they fit in particularly with the agricultural background in India which results in considerable periods of unemployment and under-employment.

In our province, for the last twenty years, the Gandhi Ashram of Meerut has laboured in this field and has achieved considerable success. While the production and distribution of khadi have been its principal activities, it has taken part in developing other village industries as well

1. Meerut, 14 December 1941. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

as in cultural, educational and medical relief work in the villages. One of its chief centres of organised village work is at Ranewa in the Fyzabad district. The Gandhi Ashram's activities are spread out in three thousand villages of our forty-eight districts. About 35,800 persons are working for the Ashram or drawing wages from the Ashram's activities. A sum of Rs. 4,32,650 is distributed by it as wages every year.

This progress is encouraging but considering the vast extent of this great province, the work of the Ashram so far has been very little. We want its work to spread out to scores of thousands of our villages and to hundreds of thousands of village workers. The Ashram has the necessary training and experience for this as well as the human material. All it lacks is money. All the money it possesses is invested in productive activities. In order to enlarge these activities which can easily be done, more funds are urgently needed. The larger the money at the disposal of the Ashram, the wider and more far-reaching its scope of beneficent and productive activities.

So we appeal to the public of this province for additional funds for the Gandhi Ashram. So far the Ashram has not made a public appeal for financial assistance. But the time has come for this and Mahatma Gandhi, under whose guidance and beneficent care the Ashram has worked, has advised us to look to our own province for funds. He has blessed our undertaking and wished us every success.

The Ashram is a registered organisation of which the signatories to this appeal are the trustees. It is authorised to raise funds.

We appeal to all Congressmen in the province to help us in raising funds, and the larger the funds the further our work will go. But our appeal is not confined to Congressmen. It extends to all the people of the province who have the welfare of our province and its five crores of people at heart.

3. The Government and the Automobile Industry¹

Larger issues before us in India overshadow many other important matters. Nevertheless, these other matters must not be ignored and indeed they throw light on larger issues also. The attitude of the British Government towards the Indian industry, even during these vital years,

1. Statement issued by Jawaharlal as Chairman, National Planning Committee, Bombay, 6 January 1942. *National Herald*, 7 January 1942.

has been most astonishing. There is a lot of talk of the development of war industries and others, but when one compares the development in India with the development in other countries, it becomes obvious how little has been done in India. Even the vital needs of the War are not enough to overcome the hostility of British interests towards Indian industrial development.

The Eastern Group Conference still apparently thinks in terms of India chiefly supplying raw material and agricultural products and big industries being concentrated in other countries. Probably the most remarkable instance of the Government of India's attitude is automobile industry.² The reasons advanced are the most puerile imaginable. For years past, efforts had been made by the Indian industrialists to start a motor industry in India. At last everything was settled, contracts were made, capital was forthcoming and all that was necessary was government's consent. One would have thought that under the stress of war requirements, any government would have welcomed the development. Not so the British Government in India. It is stated they were influenced by vested interests of American motor-car industry who did not want India to develop her own automobile industry.

Now it appears that the American authorities are starting some kind of motor plant somewhere in Sind.³ Objections previously raised as to the diversion of labour, etc., become now still more absurd. The whole thing is a fantastic illustration of the hold of foreign vested interests and their incompetence, from a larger point of view, not only of India but even of the British requirements. Another significant feature is the growth of American vested interests in India. In spite of all these perils and disasters of war, the British policy is still clinging to its old methods of cooperation. The only answer can be that before we think of cooperation, they will have to think of 'Pack up and go.'

2. Walchand Hirachand wanted to start an automobile industry in Bombay in 1940, and entered into a contract with the Chrysler corporation of Detroit, U.S.A., on royalty basis without insisting upon the investment of American capital. He wanted the government to buy trucks for war purposes from his company. The government refused to support an industry which was fully dependent on government support. On 18 December 1941, in the House of Commons, Amery stated that despite the increased demand for automobiles, and India becoming the centre for war needs for Russia and the Middle East, the government could not support an automobile industry in India as it would divert the labour and machinery more needed for India's war effort.

3. The U.S. Government was allowed to assemble automobiles at Karachi, to be supplied to Russia and the Middle East.

4. Price of Sugar-cane in the United Provinces¹

The Council of the U.P. Congress Committee have passed what I consider, a very moderate and reasonable resolution about the sugar situation and the demands of the cane-growers.² In the existing circumstances I think that even a higher price than that suggested is justified. I think this matter affecting as it does vast numbers of people is of importance even in these days of ever-developing war crisis. The cane-growers deserve sympathy and help from the public quite apart from political considerations. The government of the day has not shown much intelligence or competence in dealing with the situation and their representatives in the Gorakhpur district have certainly not covered themselves with glory of public activity. I am told that the cane-growers' agitation for better prices does not meet with favour with these representatives and it is possible that after their usual manner they might try to suppress it. That will of course be highly improper and will make the situation worse. I hope narrow politics will not be imported into this essentially economic question. Not only Congressmen but others should support the cane-growers in their demand and make it clear that governmental interference against them will be resented.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 12 January 1942. *National Herald*, 13 January 1942.
2. The U.P.P.C.C. Council, in its resolution passed on 12 January 1942, sympathised with the cane-growers' demand for higher prices of cane and recommended a rise from five annas per maund to six annas and nine pies per maund. Further it proposed that payment be made at the market price, and taking into account the system of deferred payment, the price offered should be eight annas per maund. It also called upon the provincial committees of cane-growers to form a council at the provincial level.

5. Message to the U.P. Cane-Growers Conference¹

I commend the proposal to form a provincial cane-growers' organisation in the United Provinces.² Cane-growing peasants of the province form

1. Meerut, 27 January 1942. *National Herald*, 28 January 1942.
2. The conference was held at Meerut on 31 January-1 February 1942.

an important element of our population and have special problems to face. During the past five years they have had periods when they obtained fairly good prices and periods when they were brought to the verge of ruin. It is essential that they should organise themselves to protect their interests.

Some organisations have grown up in local areas and these have often done good work, but it is necessary now to coordinate the activities of the local unions through some provincial organisation. What exact form such an organisation shall take, I cannot say. This is a matter for consultation among those concerned. It might well be a kind of federation of local unions, which would leave the initiative for work to the local unions and lay down the general policy. I hope the provincial cane-growers' organisation will be set up now.

6. The Kisans and the War¹

I have come here again to your district after a year and a half. Last time when I visited Padrauna I attended a large meeting of the kisans. From here I proceeded to meet Mahatma Gandhi, after visiting one or two other districts. When I was returning from Wardha and going home, on the way I was arrested. I was prosecuted for the speech I had delivered to the kisans of Gorakhpur. I was awarded four years imprisonment, though I stayed in jail only for thirteen months. Since my release from jail, I have been visiting several places. Our Congress, which is our panchayat, also met at Bardoli and Wardha, the place where Gandhiji resides. The meeting was held to consider the situation in the country. Your problems were also discussed. Thereafter I returned to Allahabad. From there I went to Lucknow to attend the Council meeting and I am coming from there straight to your district.

After my arrest last time, during the satyagraha movement, many brothers from this district were also arrested for taking part in the movement and for fighting for the cause of the kisans. Some of them have been released because Britain is involved in a calamity. I was arrested for inciting the public not to cooperate with Britain in this War. My views remain unchanged even after my imprisonment and I shall repeat them. Those who think that my views have changed are

1. Speech at the inauguration of the Eastern Districts Cane-Growers Conference, Rankola, Gorakhpur district, 31 January 1942. From Home Department Political (Internal) Section 1941, File No. 3/48/41, National Archives of India.

mistaken. I shall repeat what I said earlier, and the reporter may send my speech in full to the district authorities recommending my arrest, if he likes. I will be extremely glad. But if they think that by doing so they would succeed in putting a halt to our movement for Swaraj they are mistaken. Five or six days ago people took a pledge that so long as they did not achieve full independence, they would not sit idle in self-complacency. We have not yet attained that objective of ours. Our movement shall continue whether any British officer is pleased or annoyed. It shall continue in spite of the World War. Forty crore people have pledged to carry on the movement. The survival of the poor peasants and common people is dependent on its success. So long as poverty exists, no government, British or any other, can do any justice to the people or govern efficiently. We have to accomplish a great task—establishment of self-government and eradication of poverty. But it cannot be accomplished by one man.

I have come here with a special purpose. I have many things to talk about—about the war between Britain and Germany and its effect on us. But do not worry about it. All should live peacefully. The purpose of my visit today is to discuss with you the problems of the cultivation of cane.

For several years, the cultivators have been demanding a fair price for their cane. This problem is being faced, in particular, in Gorakhpur, Basti and the neighbouring districts where cane cultivation is predominant. The question before us is, how should the cultivators organise themselves to get better prices for their cane? For this we are holding this meeting here and a meeting was also organised in Meerut. After I speak to you, resolutions will be moved, which you should pass after fully understanding them.

Cane-cultivation has grown considerably in the last ten years, as a result of which the prices of cane have decreased. You wander with your cart full of cane from door to door, still cane is sold at four annas a maund. The provincial government should enact a law to protect the minimum price of the cane for the cultivator. The rise in the price of sugar should benefit the cultivator also. It was only because of the rise in sugar prices that the cultivators were attracted to shift to sugarcane cultivation. But in doing so many laws and rules have been infringed, though many of them have been repealed.

This year the government has fixed the price of cane at five annas per maund. This price is very low and unreasonable. If we are to find out the price at which sugar is being sold now we will come to know whether the price offered for the cane is a fair price. Are the cultivators gaining by the rise in the price of sugar? The price now offered

for cane is six annas per maund. The price of sugar has also gone up. So has the production cost. But what is the actual increase in the production cost? If the accounts of the sugar mills are checked, it will be found that in actual fact there has not been much rise in the production cost. Neither the labourers nor the cultivators have gained anything. Only the mill-owners have gained, who run factories only for their own benefit. If factories did not make any profit, they would be closed. But factories are open and working, yet labourers are starving. Mill-owners are getting richer, and that is why they go on setting up new factories.

Our provincial Congress has recently in a resolution criticised the government policy of fixing low prices for the cane, which is improper and unjust.

The current year's situation demands a minimum price of eight annas per maund. The rise in the sugar-price should be shared by the cultivator also. But now payments are not made at the end, and the cultivator does not benefit. The prices have been increased from five annas to six annas per maund as a result of public agitation. The sugar, which is going to be exported, will earn great profits which should be shared by the cultivator also.

A statement was issued recently on behalf of the mill-owners that they were themselves in distress and were suffering losses. Their statement contains many inexplicit arguments. We cannot rely on them. They should show us their accounts, if they want us to believe them.

You should organise yourselves peacefully. If your organisation becomes stronger, all your demands will be fulfilled. But you should not be perturbed or be afraid. You cannot achieve anything if you are afraid. It is only because of your meeting together for a month that the prices have been increased from five to six annas per maund. The government can be further pressurized to increase the price, but it is possible only if you are strong, and so is your movement.

You should continue holding your meetings. You have to strengthen the Congress through them. The cultivators in all districts should come together and make one panchayat. You should invite members from Basti, Meerut and other districts. It is only by unity that your organisation will gain strength. The resolution you pass should cover the whole province.

Your brother workers are working in factories. You should have their interest also in your mind, because their cause is aligned to your cause. The war is going on these days and the prices of commodities have risen. The demands of all the people should be fulfilled. I have heard that the condition of workers in sugar factories is very bad, and their

demands are also not met. They have not yet received their dearness allowance. Their demands may be different from that of the cultivators but the cause is the same.

Three years ago there was a strike in the sugar factories in your district. Our brother Shibban Lal Saksena worked quite a lot in this connection. There was a compromise and the dismissed workers were re-employed, and the strike was called off. The labourers later complained that the mill-owners had gone back on their promises, and their demands were not met. I also told you last time at Padrauna, that this attitude was unbecoming of mill-owners. Making promises and not fulfilling them is a great injustice. Shibban Lal Saksena was in Gorakhpur jail with me. There were some cultivators also there. I was kept separate from them. Shibban Lal Saksena had resorted to hunger-strike for the reinstatement of the dismissed officials. But this demand has yet to be fulfilled. You should support the mill workers in their demands, for only when you support them, they will in turn support you. It is the duty of both of you to support each other.

What is happening in the world today? I shall tell you something about it. The war is in progress. Several great countries have been ruined. It has now reached near the gates of our country. China and Russia are involved in this war. We sympathise with the Russians because they have a people's government. But we can only sympathise with them, we cannot help them. Our first duty is to sympathise with the cause of the proletariat of our country and then with those of others. We want Swaraj in the whole world, and it is the people who should be benefited by it. We harbour no ill will against anybody. We do not want to rule over other countries. We want Panchayati Raj in our country. Our struggle shall continue till we get Swaraj. Our sympathies are on the side of freedom, yet how can we fight for those who deny us Swaraj?

A year and a half ago a satyagraha was started and many people were arrested but the attitude of the British Government did not change. Instead, its attitude became worse. The conditions in your district are far from satisfactory. When I was in jail here, I got acquainted with your problems by reading local newspapers. This only shows how incompetent and foolish the British officials have become. They do not know how to take action. By arresting a few people they think that a movement can be arrested. I was sentenced for four years. Previously I was never sentenced for more than two years. Possibly, I have become a great man and that is why they decided to award a longer imprisonment. I do not care whether they sentence me for four or forty years. In a way it was good that I was awarded four years' imprisonment. It

had a good effect on our people, and even those outside India came to know the truth. They realised the repressive nature of the policy of the British Government towards the Indians, of awarding four years' imprisonment for delivering a speech. The British officials and the government have lost their capacity to act with wisdom. They act foolishly, and take wrong steps. One is bewildered on seeing such officials committing blunders.

We do not want Germany to win. Our sympathy is not with it. We want the British and the Allies to be free. But we cannot cooperate with the British Government as goats and sheep. Shall we then sit idle? Calcutta may be bombed. Bombs may not fall in your district, yet preparations at a large scale are being made here. We are asked to dig trenches near our houses. This talk in itself is useless. What can one do by getting into a hole like a rat?

Prices are shooting up. The number of trains has decreased and goods therefore cannot be transported. People were discouraged even from attending the *Kumbh Mela*. Since you cannot depend on commodities coming from outside, you should make your own arrangements for food, water and clothing. You should cultivate wheat, you cannot eat sugar-cane. Cloth also may not be available from outside. You have to make arrangements for this. Take up charkha and do spinning. Be self-sufficient.

War is the topic of the day. Do not get frightened or panicky. Aeroplanes may destroy your cloth and sugar mills at Gorakhpur, Bombay and Calcutta. But if you organise self-sufficient units you will be able to carry on your daily life. You have to be self-sufficient or else you will have to remain naked and starve. As long as factories can be run, you should help in their running, but at the same time prepare yourselves for any eventuality.

Do not get panicky. People in Calcutta may get panicky but you need not. What big palaces do you possess which will fall? People in villages have less to fear from bombing. Also, they live scattered and are not concentrated at one place. Even if you suffer some loss, you should not get worried.

All villages should form organisations. Congress work should be carried out in each village. Villages should inform their district committees of their problems. There should be volunteers in all the villages. They may not wear uniforms. They should stop rumours from spreading and should be ready to help all in times of need.

We should be united in our endeavour and avoid quarrels. There should be communal unity. The problem today is not only for Hindus but also for Muslims. It concerns all of us. We have to strengthen

our organisation. We do not possess arms and guns to stop the invader, but by noncooperation and nonviolence we can make it impossible for him to settle down here.

British imperialism is ending. Its last days have come. Yet, I sympathise with the Englishmen. They are in trouble these days and are being subjected to great calamities.

A revolution is spreading in the whole world. You shout *inquilab zindabad* without understanding its meaning. Revolution means complete change. The British rule is nearing its end before our eyes. But our work does not end with the liquidation of the British Empire. We do not want some old raja-maharaja to rule over us again. Nor do we want any other foreign rule. We want people's government to be established. I want you to remain calm, organise yourselves and be strong enough to stop the enemy. The question before you is not only this, whether you will receive eight annas or not. In the present circumstances it cannot be said where will be the payer and the payee.

I have talked a lot. Kamalapatiji² will tell you about other matters. This meeting will continue tomorrow. You should understand all the problems and weigh them carefully. Read all the handbills issued by the Gorakhpur Congress Committee, because it will help you in your work and organisation. You cannot sit idle. Organise yourselves. I hope the next time I visit you, by that time, we will attain Swaraj.

2. Kamalapati Tripathi (b. 1905); politician and journalist, editor of the daily *Aj*, 1932-46; editor, *Sansar*, 1946-52; Chancellor, Kashi Vidyapith since 1959; member, Constituent Assembly, 1947-50; Minister for Irrigation and Information, Home, Education in U.P., 1957-60, and for Finance, 1954-64; Chief Minister, U.P. 1971-73; Union Minister for Shipping and Transport, 1973-75; Union Minister for Railways, 1975-77; Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha since March, 1977.

7. The Task of Engineers¹

The world is in the grip of war and vast revolutionary changes hover in the air. No one can say with assurance what the future will unfold. Yet one thing is certain. We have to build the structure of our state and our society anew, and we have to build this on scientific, planned lines if it is to endure. The approach of science is essential as well as

1. Message for the Banaras Hindu University Engineering College Souvenir Volume, Gorakhpur, 31 January 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

specialist and technical knowledge. Engineers will inevitably have to play a very important part in this building up. We have seen how vast numbers of engineers have helped in the construction of the new state in Soviet Russia. Thus we in India have to look to our future engineers to fulfil a vital part of our national programme. I send my good wishes to the Engineering College of the Banaras Hindu University and to those who after completing their course there are going out into the wider field of activity. I trust that they have not considered their studies merely as a preparation for a gainful profession but rather as an avenue of national service. If they keep this ideal of national service before them and the building up of a new India out of the debris that surrounds us today, their education has been worth while. We have enormous problems before us and crises and possibly much suffering. If we keep our ideal in view and pursue it unflinchingly, we shall succeed. Let us, therefore, hold fast to our anchor and be ready for all the trials that may come.

8. Rejoinder on the Automobile Industry¹

The Commerce Department of the Government of India have issued a *communiqué*² in answer to an interview I gave some weeks ago. Various interesting facts are given in this answer which have little bearing on what I said. No one said or thought that the Eastern Group Supply Council purchased raw materials from India. The criticism made was that this Council was far more interested in developing big industries in Australia and elsewhere than in India. As for the motor-car industry I do not know what the government's laboured explanation means or explains. For my part I do not object to any steps being taken to send material from or *via* India to Russia or the Middle East. My point was that even the setting up of a new American assembly plant in Sind for motor-cars knocked the bottom out of many of the arguments advanced against the development of an Indian motor-car industry. Is it doubted or challenged that any government in India

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 3 February 1942. *The Hindu*, 4 February 1942.
2. The *communiqué* issued on 30 January 1942 stated that the Eastern Group Supply Council did not purchase raw materials from India or arrange their supply from India, and the consent of the Government of India for the establishment of an automobile industry was not required. It also denied that any commercial automobile plant was being set up in Sind.

pretending to protect and advance national interests would have long ago encouraged and helped in setting up this industry? The arguments advanced against it have been repeatedly shown to be completely without foundation. Recent developments in the war situation go to show how, even from the point of view of war requirements, it was necessary to develop such industries in India and not to rely on other countries. What vested interests and prejudices come in the way I cannot say but it is clear that extraneous considerations have overridden not only the good of India but even the long-range demands of the War. My information was that certain important automobile interests in America disapproved of the development of an Indian automobile industry. It is true that the Indian contract was made with an American firm but there is such a thing as rivalry between different American concerns dealing in automobiles. In any event, whoever was responsible, some interests have come in our way and have been backed by the Government of India.

9. The Kisan Sabhas and the Congress¹

The last meeting of the Council of the U.P.P.C.C. passed a resolution in regard to the activities of the Kisan Sabhas and other organizations in the province.² I am told that this resolution has led to some misapprehension. The main purpose of the resolution was to draw the pointed attention of Congressmen in the province to the dominant and major issue before the country and to call upon them to devote themselves to the activities suggested by the Council. In a crisis minor issues must take second place and there must be concentration of effort.

It was not suggested by the Council that the Kisan Sabhas should be wound up. They fulfil an essential function, just as trade unions of industrial workers, and occasions may arise when they have to voice the economic demands of the kisans. There is this difference however: Congress committees in the districts and rural areas also function primarily as kisan sabhas and voice kisan demands. Wherever possible, this should be done through the Congress committee.

1. 24 February 1942. *National Herald*, 25 February 1942.

2. In the resolution passed on 4 February 1942, it was stated that in order to avoid diversion and wastage of energy, and conflicting interpretations of Congress policy, all responsible Congressmen should function through the Congress platform and not through other organisations. In particular, this policy should be followed in regard to the kisans who formed the backbone of the Congress organisation in the province and whose interest must be considered paramount by the Congress.

But the crux of the matter is that under present circumstances when the country is face to face with grave dangers, the usual economic demands become relatively unimportant for the time being. The real question is how to face this situation. The Congress has suggested that we must organise self-protection, self-sufficiency in regard to food and clothing and other necessities, and take other steps which I need not refer to here. To forget these primary issues is to lose oneself in unreality. We must remember that we are already in the midst of a mighty revolution and the old methods of work no longer apply. The real test is: how far have Congressmen in any district succeeded in carrying out the detailed directions of the Council in regard to organization, etc. If they have succeeded in this then they have served the cause of the kisans well. If not, then all their conferences and demonstrations are wasted effort, and perhaps even worse, for they divert attention from the main issue. We have little time left to talk or pass resolutions; we have to work and work hard and continuously if we are not going to be overwhelmed by events. Every Congressman must realise this fully.

It appears that the Kisan Sabha has split up into two factions.³ This is a strange time to choose for ideological or other conflicts and those who bring about these splits surely do not serve the cause of the kisans whatever else they might do. One of these factions has declared itself entirely against the present policy of the Congress in regard to the War and is endeavouring to carry on propaganda in this behalf. It is of course open to them to do so. But it is not open to any Congressman to associate himself with any organization, kisan or student or any other, which openly and deliberately flouts vital decisions of the Congress and runs down the Congress. Every individual must decide for himself whether he wants to remain in the Congress and function through it or whether he wants to function through an organization opposed to the Congress. He cannot have it both ways. At any time this would be undesirable. At a time of grave crisis, it is intolerable.

That part of the Kisan Sabha which is in agreement with and supports the general policy of the Congress has no such difficulty to face. But, even so, it must not fritter away national energy by organizing conferences and demonstrations unless there is an urgent call for this on some important issue affecting the kisans, as, for instance, the sugar

3. The All India Kisan Sabha, dominated by the Communist group, at Nagpur, on 13 February 1942, passed a resolution urging upon the kisans to align themselves on the side of the Allied powers in "waging a relentless war for the final extermination of fascism." The U.P. Congressmen in the organisation opposed this resolution.

situation and the plight of the cane-growers. Ordinarily no kisan conferences should be held and Congressmen should function in the name of and in the platform of the Congress. Those that have already been announced and for which arrangements have been made may, however, be held.

The real point to remember is that the kind of work demanded from Congressmen today is the hard and solid work outlined by the Council in their instructions.⁴ To have conferences is to escape from the 'real work and to engage oneself in trivial and flashy activity which has little relation to present-day facts. To invite people from other districts to them is to waste the precious time of good workers.

I do not say that conferences should not be held. Sometimes they are useful, more especially when they are workers' conferences. But whenever they are held, they must be under Congress auspices and to consider the actual work to be done—not to pass high-sounding resolutions about other matters.

This is a time of testing for all of us. Let us prove worthy, for only thus can we render true service to our people.

May I add that I am totally unable, for the reasons given above, to accept any invitations to attend conferences. I may, when the opportunity comes to me, visit certain districts. But these visits will have nothing to do with conferences.

4. See *ante*, p. 97.

10. Kisans Should Follow the Congress¹

The Kisan Sabhas have performed a useful purpose in the past and will no doubt serve the kisans in the future also but at the present moment the wider issues before the country overshadow all else and even the smaller demands of the kisans have to take a second place in order to meet the present situation. The only correct way to function is through our national organisation, the Congress. The Kisan Sabhas should

1. Speech at the Provincial Kisan Conference, Pratapgani, District Jaunpur, 28 February 1942. From *National Herald*, 5 March 1942.

continue to protect kisans' interests but the main approach should be through the Congress platform.

I have heard that the Kisan Sabha has been split up into two parties, and one of these has repudiated the Congress policy in regard to the War and is criticizing the Congress. With this organisation I have nothing in common and all such organisations, whether of the kisans or of the students, as are opposing the Congress in regard to vital matters of policy will have to be opposed by the Congress. On this issue there can be no compromise.

I would like to remind those present here that this is no time for a separate platform and voicing petty grievances or passing long, critical resolutions as you have been doing in the past. You should give up all petty bickerings, and party rivalries and cooperate in the common task.

You must realise that a great revolution is taking place all over the world. War is raging not far from India. It might come to India itself but there is no reason for people to get panicky and excited, but you should be ready to organise yourselves to face any consequences. The fight for Swaraj must continue in some form or the other. But that does not mean that we are going to submit to any other aggressor or invader. You should carry on your struggle against every country that seeks to dominate India for its own objective.

11. The New World Order¹

The new order must be based on a recognition of political and economic freedom of all nations subject only to world adjustments mutually agreed upon for the common good. Every form of domination or exploitation by one people of another must be eliminated.

Full racial equality should be recognised. International and national planning of production, transport, distribution, raising of material and cultural world standards especially of economically backward nations are necessary. Production must be for consumption, not for profit. Private monopolies and special privileges should be ended.

1. Message to the Progressive Group, Bombay, on the occasion of a lecture on "Jawaharlal Nehru's conception of a New World Order" organised by the Group on 10 March 1942. *Free Press Journal*, 12 March 1942.

12. To the Editor, "Hindusthan Standard"¹

Sir,

In your issue of the 29th May you have commented in your leading article on a certain statement I am reported to have made in Lahore.² Your comment is perfectly justified but the report of my address in Lahore was a remarkable collection of errors and misstatements.³ I referred there to an attempt by Mr. Walchand Hirachand to start an aeroplane factory in India and not to ship-building. Of course he is also interested in ship-building. The facts about this incident as given are incorrect, although the moral you draw is correct.

It is also incorrect to say that the National Planning Committee had made any plans for starting certain big industries which government opposed. The National Planning Committee was engaged in drawing up a plan and scheme for the development of industry and agriculture, etc. in India. It was not the function of the National Planning Committee to start industries as such. It considered, among other things, the well-known proposal to start an automobile industry in India which it favoured.

The three big industries which might well have been started in India but for government opposition are: ship-building, automobile and aeroplane manufacture. Something in a small way has been done in recent months in regard to ship-building and aeroplanes. But this is just a tiny fraction of what could have been done. As for automobiles, so far as I know, government opposition continues.

Yours etc.,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Lucknow, 31 May 1942. *The Hindusthan Standard*, 3 June 1942.

2. The reference is to Jawaharlal's press conference on 22 May 1942. See *ante*, pp. 325-330.

3. The report quoted Jawaharlal as saying that the Government of India worked to the detriment of Indian industrial interests as was evident from the treatment meted out to Walchand Hirachand who wanted to start a ship-building industry. The Commerce Member of the Government of India had told Walchand Hirachand not to concern himself about the ship-building industry in India when they could get ships from the U.S.A.

13. British Economic Policy in India¹

Much has been said of the New Delhi which is to come into effect after the War. Peace aims and war aims remain undefined. In the political world we know what is happening. What is taking place in the economic sphere also is worth studying, as it appears to be a pointer to what is being contemplated to be brought about after the War. One aspect of the post-war world has not been lost sight of by British interests—this is the retention of their foreign markets, especially Indian markets for British goods. The Eastern Group Supply Council, it is well known, took special care not to encourage any industry in India which might come into conflict with British industry after the War. The Government of India, even ignoring the necessities of war, have discouraged the growth of basic Indian industries. The policy appears to be, as a whole, to retain India as an agricultural country producing raw materials.

Much light is thrown on this by Sir Homi Mody in his answers to correspondents when discussing the Grady Report.² He repeated the old libel that India was not suited for industrial development on a big scale. This is a surprising statement from an Indian industrialist, but everyone loses his identity in the India Government and becomes an automaton.

I think every person who has studied the question must be convinced that India does not lack anything for rapid industrial development and further that only such development can solve India's problems and raise the standard of living. It is difficult to judge the Grady Report without seeing it in full, but certain hints in it seem to emphasise that the production of raw materials would be the special function of India. Also, we should rather concentrate on repair shops and not on big production plants. With this, I am sure, Indians will not agree. We are not going to accept a colonial agricultural position.

1. Interview to the foreign press, Bombay, 24 June 1942. *The Hindu*, 26 June 1942.
2. On 4 June 1942, Homi Mody welcomed the recommendations of the Grady Mission for substantial increase in the Indian army but he did not agree with their recommendation for the reorganisation of the Government of India for war effort. He also stated that the wholesale rationalisation and regimentation of industry to suit the war needs, for example, prohibiting manufacture of certain goods or the government taking over certain plants, was not practicable.

British policy appears in a lurid light, specially when we consider the operations of the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation in India, which is being patronised and helped by the British Government. This Corporation apparently enjoys a monopoly in the trade in certain commodities. It gets high priorities through the Supply Department and thus controls the export trade from India. Incidentally it makes heavy profit. Thus the control price of sugar in India is round about Rs. 12 per Bengal maund, but the U.K.C.C., which enjoys a monopoly in sugar, buys the Indian sugar and sells it in Iran at Rs. 37 per Bengal maund. This monopoly in trade applies to many other commodities like wheat, oilseeds, oils, lorry tyres, etc. It appears that Indian firms are compelled to deal through this Corporation.³ Now this is not only a grave scandal, but a menace to India's export trade now and hereafter. It is important that public attention should be drawn to this, because it is significant by itself and is an indication of the kind of post-war world that Britain is aiming at. We can have no truck with this.

The recent Anglo-American Trade Agreement⁴ contains many fine phrases, but looking at it from the point of view of India, danger lurks in it. Again there is a tendency to divide the world into an industrial and manufacturing group on the one side and a group of primary raw material producers on the other. Presumably India is in the latter group. Secondly, it appears the U.S.A. seeks concessions from England at the expense of other countries. We know from past experience that India has often to pay and bear the burden whenever it is of advantage to Britain. Public opinion must be alive to all these dangers and it must be made clear that on no account is India going to accept the kind of treatment she got after the last War. How the Lend-Lease provisions are to be applied to India, now, must be clarified and we must know exactly where we stand in regard to it.

3. The Vice-president of the All India Manufacturers Organization complained on 21 June 1942 that the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation was interfering with the legitimate rights of the Indian commercial community.
4. The Agreement, signed in February 1942, stated that the terms and conditions of the repayment of the Lend-Lease supplies "shall be such as not to be a burden on the commerce between the two countries, but to promote mutually advantageous economic relations between them." Further it aimed at "eliminating discrimination in world trade by reducing tariffs and other trade barriers."

14. India's Backwardness¹

It was about two and a half years ago that I last came to Aligarh and since then events have been moving with electric rapidity. Kaleidoscopic changes have enveloped the whole world and nobody can say with any degree of exactitude what the shape of things to come would be. The Congress, and along with it I myself, had criticized the British Government very bitterly as the first step towards our campaign for the freedom of India; that criticism was primarily meant to serve as an eyeopener for the Indian masses. That stage—the stage of theory, meetings, speeches and slogans—is naturally now over and the Congress, as a result mainly of the problems arising out of the world conflagration, has come to grips with the grim realities of the situation. Our tours and visits have, therefore, been greatly curtailed and the Congress for the past two or three years has been racking its brains and labouring at the very essential question of examining the burning topics of the day affecting the villager, the educated unemployed and the kisan. Unemployment, food, wealth, production and distribution and the removal of real poverty of the Indian people have been engaging the attention of the Congress and a number of sub-committees consisting of specialists in their respective spheres of inquiry have been labouring in order to find out the extent and possibilities of remedying the evils and establishing ways and means whereby our country in spite of its poverty and foreign domination may be able to stand on its own legs economically and industrially. The National Planning Committee has arrived at some conclusion already but the problems cropping up in dealing with points affecting the material well-being of nearly 400 millions of souls inhabiting such a vast sub-continent, are too puzzling to be solved expeditiously.

India grows enough of food but it is the lack of foresight and mishandling of situations by our rulers which is responsible for the present camouflage of the food problem of the masses and the shortage of grain all over the country. The British system of government is too old and antediluvian; it has outlived its usefulness and no good can come out of its continuance. Russia has evolved during the last twenty years an economic and industrial scheme whereby the whole country has been rejuvenated and her production of food, machinery, necessities of life

1. Speech at the Lyall Library, Aligarh, 26 June 1942. From *The Hindustan Times*, 30 June 1942.

and war material has made giant strides. Americans, who have recently visited India, have wondered at the state of affairs prevailing in such a vast agricultural country whose inhabitants have been kept so miserably underfed where unemployment stares in the face, where incomes are so paltry that an educated young man can be had as a clerk on Rs. 40 per month. Take the recent case of an applicant in the American Government offices at New Delhi who offered himself at Rs. 75 and was asked if it was a weekly salary he demanded. This question was put to him because in those countries salaries are calculated on a weekly basis.

The horrible lack of production in the field of manufactures is deplorable. Whenever any proposals or schemes for manufacturing motor-cars, ships or aeroplanes in this country are put forward, the British Government turn them down with some excuse or other and thus India has been industrially kept a stunt. This industrial starvation has not only resulted in the depressing condition and growing state of poverty in India but has also proved a huge error in so far as the present need for arms and armaments, industrial output of military necessities and modern means of transport are concerned. If our government had foreseen the wisdom of establishing these basic industries in India, she would have a valuable arsenal for the military needs of the Allied nations and stood shoulder to shoulder with them in resisting and wiping out Hitlerism and sweeping the Pacific clear of the Japanese menace. British policy in India, during the last 150 years, has been one of cold inattention and ruthless disregard to propagation of industrial production. India's thirst for expansion of her output may be undertaken on the lines of China where cottage industries were revived which besides being considerably immune from the effects of aerial bombing provided bread to the villager and were spread over the whole country. This was a fitting reply to imperialist and industrial Japan given by a less industrial and poverty-stricken China who has been remarkably resisting wanton onslaughts on her freedom continually for the last five years.

The heroism and bold stand taken by China against the Japanese hordes despite her comparatively smaller provision of modern weapons of warfare speak volumes of the valour of her hitherto untrained armies. Freedom is dear to the Chinese more than their life and the spirit of sacrifice that they have shown has won for them the sympathy and admiration of all democratic nations. The fire of patriotism and zeal for the integrity of their country that has been illustrated by them will serve as a beacon light to all subject races and downtrodden countries at the time of the reconstruction of the world which is sure to follow this colossal War.

The brave resistance put up by Russia against Hitler's armies—armies of 50 lakhs of Nazi soldiers were hurled into the Soviet lands like swarms of locusts—bears testimony to the Russian will and determination to save their country by dint of sacrifice hitherto unknown in the annals of modern nations. The self-destruction of the famous Dnieper Dam, built with the unparalleled sacrifice of the teeming millions of Soviet Russia, was an act of great sacrifice and courage. That dam was a monument of which any country could be justly proud. It was the highest example of engineering skill, and a product of billions of pounds which provided electric energy to the whole of Southern Russia for building and maintaining her vast industrial factories and agricultural plants.

India, on the contrary, is nowhere in the scale of power-producing units. An American official visiting India said that electrical energy for driving industrial machinery in India was less than 1/10 of what New York alone consumed.

What hope can there be for the establishment of industries in a country like India, so miserably a "back-bencher" and a mere spectator in the race for superiority of might and struggle for existence?

I ardently wish for a federation of the three ancient countries of India, China and Russia, and an alliance of the Asiatic countries for preserving the freedom, peace and harmony of countries east of the Suez.

A programme of cooperative groups in all the towns, villages and *mohallas* should be drawn. These alone will serve as a millennium in warding off the present danger threatening us. Cooperative groups will go a long way in arranging solutions of the food problem of the masses and in protecting their hearths and homes.

Owing to emergency conditions likely to prevail in the country, the government has requisitioned school-buildings in various provinces for lodging the armies or for A.R.P. work. But are the Viceregal houses and bungalows occupied by big officials not being utilized for the purpose?

Aligarh's deficiency in foodgrains and the inconvenience caused to the general public owing to the control of prices are due to the lack of foresight and proper management by the district authorities who are admittedly responsible for the comfort and well-being of the citizens.

15. China Rebuilds For Democracy¹

In the late summer of 1938, when the fate of Czechoslovakia hung in the balance, I met, at the house of an English friend in London, some people who had recently come from China. They were both Chinese and English, and they told us of the early beginnings of a village co-operative movement to produce goods which China lacked so much and to prevent an influx of Japanese commodities. It was a brave idea, but it was still in its infancy and one could hardly imagine then that it would grow and grow till it made a vital difference to events in China. I was interested in it.

Later, when I was back in India, small pamphlets and folders came to me from time to time from Hong Kong and Chungking telling me of the rapid growth of the Chinese industrial cooperatives. My interest in them grew, not only because of China, but because of our own village industry movement in India. When I went to China in August 1939, I was eager to find out more about the C.I.C. and to visit, if possible, some of their centres of activity. Some more information I gathered in Chungking, but my visit was suddenly cut short by the war in Europe and I hurried back home.

Pamphlets and sometimes articles, chiefly in American magazines, gave further information and as I read these my excitement grew. I referred to 'Indusco' in my speeches and in articles in the newspapers, and many letters came to me asking for further details. I suggested that some of our village industry experts should go to China to study the Chinese cooperatives on the spot, and some C.I.C. experts should be invited to pay a visit to India. But war developments brought new complications in India and all our attention was diverted to these.²

I went to prison. In the summer of 1940 a copy of Edgar Snow's new book *Scorched Earth* (named in its original edition in America *The Battle for Asia*) reached me in Dehra Dun Jail. I read it with intense interest but no part of it held me so much as the chapters dealing with the Chinese industrial cooperatives.

Two or three months went by and then a packet brought me a gift from Madame Sun Yat-sen from Hong Kong. To be remembered by her in prison was joy enough for me, but when I opened the packet I

1. Allahabad, 2 July 1942. Foreword to Nym Wales's *China Builds for Democracy* (Allahabad, 1942). Reprinted in *Asia and the Americas* (New York), January 1943.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 10, pp. 552-62.

felt an additional excitement. It contained Nym Wales's *China Builds for Democracy*. Here at last, I thought, was the very book I wanted, which would tell me everything about this fascinating experiment which had already achieved so much and which held so much promise for the future.

When I came out of prison in December last I spoke about this book to many friends and every one wanted to borrow it from me. I am not usually ungenerous with my books but I was loth to part with this particular one because it was a valued gift. But the pressure was too great and it went from hand to hand. Two months ago another copy came to me. This was the American edition of the same book sent by Nym Wales. This also was snatched by others and it has not come back to me yet.

It is obvious that there is a particular demand for this book in India for in many ways we have to face the same problems as in China. One of the problems that India has thought of for many years has been the relation of big industry with village industries. Is there an inherent conflict between them and must one of them survive at the expense of the other? Is there no way of coordinating the two? I am glad therefore that this book is being published in India and I hope it will have many readers. For the experience of China is of inestimable value to us and I am sure we can learn much from it.

I have long held that the industrialization of India is essential in order to increase rapidly our production and our national wealth and thus to raise our standards of living. I do not think that we can solve our poverty problem without industrialization and growth of big industry. I do not think that any non-industrialized country can be economically independent.

And yet I have worked for the spread and growth of village industries, not merely as a matter of political discipline but because I believed in them. Many of my friends have not appreciated this dual urge of mine, and have charged me with a lack of faith in this or that, and with attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable. They have not convinced me and I still hold that in India we must push both big industry and village industries and coordinate the two. I recognise that this cannot be easily done under the present capitalist system. Change that system then. Indeed it is bound to go under the stress of this War and its after-effects, and give place to a planned economy.

Gandhiji has, I think, done a great service to India by his emphasis on village industry. Before he did this, we were all, or nearly all, thinking in a lop-sided way and ignoring not only the human aspect of the question, but the peculiar conditions prevailing in India. India, like

China, has enormous man-power, vast unemployment and under-employment. It is no good comparing it with the tight little countries of Europe which gradually became industrialized with small and growing populations. Any scheme which involves the wastage of our labour power, or which throws people out of employment is bad. From the purely economic point of view, even apart from the human aspect, it may be more profitable to use more labour power and less specialised machinery. It is better to find employment for large numbers of people at a low income level than to keep most of them unemployed. It is possible also that the total wealth produced by a large number of cottage industries might be greater than that of some factories producing the same kind of goods.

The objective aimed at should be maximum production, equitable distribution, and no unemployment. With India's vast population this cannot be achieved by having big industry only, or cottage industry only. The former will certainly result in much greater production of some commodities but the unemployment problem will remain more or less as it is, and it will be difficult to have equitable distribution. It is also likely that our total production will be far below our potential because of the wastage of labour power. With cottage industries only there will be more equitable distribution but the total production will remain at a low level and hence standards will not rise. In the present state of India of course even widespread cottage industry can raise standards considerably above the existing level. Nevertheless they will remain low. There are other factors also which make it almost impossible for any country to depend entirely on cottage industry. No modern nation can exist without certain essential articles which can only be produced by big industry. Not to produce these is to rely on imports from abroad and thus to be subservient to the economy of foreign countries. It means economic bondage and probably also political subjection.

Therefore, it seems essential to have both big industries and cottage industries in India and to plan them in such a way as to avoid conflict. Big industry must be encouraged and developed as rapidly as possible, but the type of industry thus encouraged should be chosen with care. It should be heavy and basic industry which is the foundation of a nation's economic strength and on which other industries can gradually be built up. The development of electric power is the prerequisite for industrial growth. Machine-making, ship-building, chemicals, locomotives, automobiles, etc. should follow. All these, and others like them, are wealth-producing and work-producing industries which do not create unemployment elsewhere. Lighter industries should not be encouraged to begin with, partly because the capital at our disposal is limited and

required for heavy industry, partly because they are likely to come into conflict with cottage industries and thus create unemployment.

Unfortunately industrial growth in this country has largely been confined to the lighter industries. The few attempts that our industrialists made to develop heavy industry were effectively scotched by the British Government. British industrialists, thinking of the brave new world to come, were more anxious to preserve their economic stranglehold in post-war India than to think of winning the War by allowing basic industries to develop in India.

This ordered development of industry in India and coordination between large-scale, medium, and cottage industries, can only be achieved by national planning. There can be no effective planning without political and economic freedom. Nor can there be any planning without a great deal of state control. The basic industries and public utilities and transport services should in any event be owned or fully controlled by the state. The measure of control over others might be less. But it is desirable that any big industry which might come into conflict with a cottage industry encouraged by the state, should be fully controlled by the state. This will avoid conflict and make coordination easy.

The use of electric power has made an enormous difference to industry and it is now possible to decentralise even big industries. This works greatly in favour of small and cottage industries.

All these considerations apply to normal times. War conditions have, however, enormously enhanced the value of small and cottage industries, and it is here especially that the example of China is of great importance to us. It seems to be ideally suited to war conditions and for resistance to an invader. What has amazed me is the extraordinary production ratio of these industrial cooperatives. The monthly production value is stated to be two times greater than capital investment. This may be due to war factors; nevertheless it is astounding.

The democratic basis of these cooperatives, and their development on this basis in this warring world, is full of interest and significance. On this basis political democracy may survive; it is doubtful if it can do so on any other basis.

Neither India nor China is now going to have a normal capitalist industrial development. Yet go ahead industrially we must, or we perish. We shall have to find our own way, to seek our own equilibrium. Possibly the future will lead us and others to a cooperative commonwealth. Possibly the whole world, if it is to rise above its present brute level of periodic wars and human slaughter, will have to organise itself in some such way.

16. To K.T. Shah¹

Allahabad
July 21, 1942

My dear Shah,

I have received both copies of your letter dated July 14th.² Both of them reached me today on my return here.

I quite agree with you in what you say about the dangerous implications of what is happening. I think that every effort should be made to expose the tactics of government and to keep the public informed of them. Some criticisms have appeared in the press but they are hardly enough. Possibly I might say some thing on this subject a little later.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter, Shah drew Jawaharlal's attention to Ramaswamy Mudaliar's distorted statement on automobile industry with definite misstatements of facts. He wanted a public contradiction. He also recalled how Tatas' had signed a contract in steel with a foreign company, which was, in fact a foreign company with India only in brackets. He wanted all this to be exposed immediately.

NATIONAL HERALD

1. To R. Dalmia¹

Bardoli
December 21, 1941

Dear Mr. Dalmia,²

Your letter of the 15th December has been forwarded to me here. I have read it with regret. I had of course discussed the matter repeatedly with my colleague Shri Mohanlal Saksena as well as with other colleagues before I ventured to write to you. Shri Mohanlal Saksena's account of what happened is somewhat different from yours, and I believe that his point of view has been placed before you on previous occasions. Even apart from this discrepancy it seems to me odd that you, as a businessman, could have expected Shri Mohanlal Saksena to give you an assurance which was not in his power to give. All of us who are connected with the company owning the *National Herald* are bound by our own rules and articles as well as by the provisions of the law relating to companies. No one can give an assurance which is likely to be in contravention of all these articles or the law. So far as I am concerned, I have no desire whatever to press any one to give money for the *National Herald* if he is unwilling to do so. We have been fortunate in receiving assistance repeatedly from friends and sympathisers on whom we had no legal or moral claim of any kind. In regard to the shares issued to your friends on your behalf, we have no alternative but to treat them as shares with all the obligations and liabilities that attach to such shares. If I had realised that you were an unwilling party to this bargain, I would certainly not have pressed you for any payment whatever or asked you or accepted any money you sent. In future I do not propose to trouble you in regard to any matter involving a money payment or donation. It is not my habit to beg for money from anyone or to be beholden to anyone because of a payment of any money. There are other things in my life which I consider more important than money.

I regret that this difference of opinion should have arisen between us over an insignificant sum. You have stated that you consider this a matter of principle. I have also tried to follow certain principles in life and I shall continue in my endeavour to adhere to them. Money has seldom made a difference to my activities and it is not likely to do

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Ram Krishna Dalmia (1893-1978); industrialist and founder of the Dalmia-Jain group of industries.

so in future. What is far more important is the behaviour of individuals, for it is by this that they are judged.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. To K. Rama Rao¹

Allahabad
January 5, 1942

My dear Rama Rao,

I have received your letter of January 3rd together with its four notes dealing with the editorial department of the *Herald*.² I have read these notes carefully.

When I was in Lucknow last, I told you that I intended returning and spending two or three days in Lucknow, especially on *Herald* business. It was my intention to interview each member of the editorial staff separately and to form my own opinion and then to discuss the matter with you. I find now that it is difficult for me to find the time to visit Lucknow for this purpose. I have only five days before I go to Wardha. I am leaving Allahabad on the 10th evening for Wardha. My mind is too full of other things for me to be able to visit Lucknow and devote time to the *Herald*. I must therefore postpone this till I return from Wardha, which means the last week of this month.

The notes you have sent me are helpful and give me some background of the present position. I shall try to send you some articles before I go to Wardha. Possibly I might send one with this letter if I have the time to write it.

The situation, especially the internal position in the Congress, is a difficult one and it is not easy to say what developments might take place at Wardha.³ But the right policy to pursue anyhow is not to emphasize any differences between Gandhiji and the Congress and rather to emphasize the underlying unity. Further to lay stress on the fact that the difference so far revealed does not relate to present action but to a possible future contingency which might not arise. The present course is clear and it is up to all Congressmen to concentrate on

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. The notes related to the editorial staff's bio-data, the work assigned to them and the salaries drawn by them.

3. See *ante*, pp. 74-77.

the work ahead instead of losing themselves in theoretical arguments about an uncertain future. No individual, much less an organisation, can definitely commit itself in regard to an indeterminate future, more especially during the changing times. We can adhere to certain principles and objectives. It is clear, as the Working Committee resolution says, that there is no change in our position or policy in regard to the British Government. It is equally clear that we must organise and strengthen the people to meet any possible development. Whatever variation in policy might take place, and this cannot be as far as we can see any major change, this background of work must continue.

Some such lines should be adopted and, whatever happens at Wardha, it should be adhered to. Further stress should be laid on the fact that it is a little absurd to talk of splits between Gandhiji and others or of Gandhiji leaving the Congress. The Congress and he are too much bound together for any such development to take place even though there might be occasional differences of opinion.

T.N. Singh has written to me about Krishna Menon's cable in which he suggests that the money owing to him should be written off and no further payments of this kind should be budgeted for. Also that he might continue to send us cables of a maximum weekly wordage of twelve hundred words.

Of course now the old account of Krishna Menon should be written off. As regards his cables, I think, as I told you before, that these should be allowed to continue. Many of these cables are not in a form to be published. Of that you should be the judge and you should publish only such parts as may be considered necessary. But it is important that the cables should come and should be communicated in full to me, for they convey information which might be useful. It is difficult to suggest the maximum wordage. I do not quite know what the exact rates for press cables between England and India are, but they are at present lower than they had been.

I suggest that you might cable to him to the effect that you appreciate his suggestion about writing off past dues. Further that he should continue sending cables whenever imperative to do so using minimum number of words necessary, maximum generally not exceeding a thousand words weekly.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. To K. Rama Rao¹

New Delhi
April 2, 1942

Dear Rama Rao,

I have not seen the *Herald* for several days but I have read in other papers extract from the *Herald's* comment on the Cripps's proposals. It appears that the leading article in the *Herald* dealing with the subject had the heading: "Put it in you pipe and smoke it, Cripps."²

I was astounded to see this. Of course I could not imagine any newspaper which has claims to dignity and responsibility using such language in its editorial. I presume this was meant to be funny and smart. It was neither. It was highly undignified and verging on vulgarity. This kind of thing brings down the reputation of our paper. I have been greatly put out by it. I do not want the *Herald* to behave at any time in a manner lacking in dignity.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Printed in *National Herald*, 30 March 1942.

4. To Rafi Ahmed Kidwai¹

Allahabad
April 17, 1942

My dear Rafi,

I enclose copy of a letter I am sending to Rama Rao.² I do not yet know all the facts and I am thus unable to express an opinion. Even if I had all the facts before me I would hesitate to say anything because the matter is for you to decide and not for me or the board of directors. I hope that you will deal with it suitably as you will know how to.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter of 17 April Jawaharlal had expressed his indignation over Chalapathi Rau's resignation who had resigned in protest against the interference in the editorial work by one of the directors. While commenting on the director-editor relationship, Jawaharlal expressed the hope that the issue would be settled after a heart to heart talk between the persons concerned.

Ordinarily it is best to allow latitude and discretion in the matter of publication to the editor. In very special cases it may be otherwise. Editors worth their salt are very touchy about these things. It seems to me that Sant Singh,³ by repeated visits to the *Herald* office, must have succeeded in thoroughly irritating Chalapathi Rau.⁴ I have not seen Sant Singh's statement and I do not know what it was about. But to a hard-worked editor these visits of an outsider are apt to prove trying.

Anyway the matter is for you to deal with and I am sure you will do so adequately. Chalapathi Rau is, as you know, a quiet and a good worker. Even apart from this relatively small incident, it is desirable that he should feel that he has your confidence as well as ours. A gentle approach and friendly treatment go a long way to gain the confidence and goodwill of a person.

I am going today to Calcutta from where I proceed to Gauhati. Possibly I might visit some refugee camps there. But the time is very short before the Working Committee meeting. I do not know that I can do much. Anyhow I think even a brief visit is worth while.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Leader of a Sikh faction; member, Indian Legislative Assembly from West Punjab at that time.
4. M. Chalapathi Rau (b. 1907); joined *National Herald* in 1938; Assistant Editor, *The Hindustan Times*, 1943-45; Editor, *National Herald*, 1946-77; Chairman, Board of Editors, *National Herald*, 1977-78; President, Indian Federation of Working Journalists, 1950-55; author of several books including *Fragments of Revolution*, *Gandhi and Nehru*, *The Press in India*, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, and *All in All*; member of advisory board of *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*; vice-chairman of Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.

5. The Herald'

After a long time I write again in the *Herald*. Two years ago I used to write articles, signed and unsigned, in this newspaper with some frequency. Thirteen months of prison came, and ever since I was discharged nearly six months ago, I have been busy with other matters and troubled in mind and spirit. I have been in no mood to write. Once only during these six months I have contributed to the *Herald*.

1. *National Herald*, 2 June 1942.

But today I have to take up my pen again, for certain events affecting the *Herald* have taken place, and I owe it to our many friends and comrades that I should take them into our confidence.

About two years or more ago the directors considered the possibility of a demand for security being made on the *Herald*. We were not quite decided then as to what we should do. We wanted to continue the *Herald* as long as we possibly could, and yet the idea of furnishing securities to the government went against the grain. I was myself opposed to any submission in this respect by giving securities. When securities were actually demanded, I was in prison and my colleagues, who were out, decided to give them. I was a little doubtful of this decision and yet I felt that the responsibility was theirs and I must accept it. The public of this province generously came to our rescue and the securities were deposited.

Now that these securities have been forfeited and fresh securities are bound to be demanded (I do not know, as I write, what, the new impositions are) the question had to be considered afresh.² Fortunately for us, many leading Congressmen came to Lucknow for the meeting of the provincial Congress committee and the directors took counsel with them. They were unanimously of opinion that the *Herald* should be continued, if this was at all possible. We have willingly bowed to their will and decided to furnish additional securities, well knowing the risks that lie in our future path. We have done so also because we have faith in our people and know that they will come to our help in this hour of need.

In doing so, it is not our intention to swerve from the path that we have chosen. Those of us who sponsored the *Herald* four years ago did not do so light-heartedly, nor was it for us a commercial venture. We wanted to serve in this way the cause of India's freedom and, if at any time the *Herald* forgets this or weakens in its resolve, then indeed it dies, though it may continue as a newssheet still. We have no intention of dying in this way. Physical deaths may come to the *Herald*, but, if we can help it, there is going to be no spiritual decay or extinction.

It is easy to criticise the *Herald* and we, who have been connected with it since it began, know well its shortcomings. Very few of our dreams materialise as we would like them to do, very few of our hopes take shape. Yet the *Herald*, we believe, has carried something of those dreams and hopes, and has, in spite of many failings, been a stout soldier in India's cause. Because of this belief, we forget the heartaches

2. See *ante*, p. 335.

that it has so often given us, because of this we go on dreaming of its future.

The *Herald* is associated with us, with me, and many people imagine that it gives expression to my views. As a matter of fact I have not always agreed with it and, living and working as I do, I can hardly keep in touch with it. Yet I know it has been, on the whole, a faithful interpreter of Congress policy and has sought to serve our people during a fateful period of our history. During these critical days it is no easy matter for an editor to shape his way, to be true to his cause and yet to avoid unnecessary risks. In any event he must be true whatever the risk. On behalf of the directors and myself, I should like to express our appreciation of the work of our editor and his staff, and to say that we assume full responsibility for the political line which they took up and which has brought fresh trouble to the *Herald*. I should also like to express our gratitude to those journalists and others, who though differing from us, have condemned the action of the U.P. Government.

The government, I fear, does not like us or our works. Rumour has long whispered in our ears that it is bent on killing the *Herald*. I must confess that we do not like this government and it is one of our chief functions to create conditions in the public mind and elsewhere which will end for ever such governments in India. For today they are intolerable impositions anywhere and especially in India. So there must be conflict between us and the government of the day. Whether it suppresses us or not we do not know. But we do know that we shall survive, and we also know that the moving finger has written the fate that must soon overwhelm the authoritarian and alien regime in India. Even today, in spite of its pomp and circumstance, of its oppressive authority, of its arrests and detentions, of its securities demanded and forfeited, of its arrogance and conceit, it fades away into the shadow of the things that have been. Nemesis overtakes it. Frightened of ghosts and phantoms, it fails to see the reality that faces it and itself becomes increasingly ghostlike. Wit and wisdom left it long ago, competence and efficiency have passed it by. The cause of empire is dragging it to its inevitable end.

We shall survive, and this Empire and this government will go. But there will be much to do for us and for the *Herald* in the months and years to come. And so we make appeal to our friends and comrades, wherever they may be, to come to our help immediately and send us big sums and small, so that they and we might tide over this new difficulty.

6. The Shape of Things to Come¹

We live in extraordinary times of crisis and tension when everyday brings a surfeit of news good and bad, usually bad. All sense of continuity has gone from our lives and we sit on the edge of the volcano of change. What that change is going to be, few even among the prophets can say. Inevitably our attention is absorbed in the tragic drama of the moment and in the pressing problems that surround us and threaten to overwhelm us.

Nevertheless it is not enough for us to lose ourselves in the present and not to think of the future. That future, after all, will take its shape out of this present. It may be that this future is beyond our control, for vast elemental forces are at work and human beings, however big they may appear to be in the contemporary scene, are but playthings in the hands of those elemental forces which are shaping the world. Still it is obvious that that future will be shaped by human beings for human beings. It becomes important therefore that, whatever the burdens we may have to carry in the present, we may not forget that future. If we are to play a worthy and an effective part in that future, we have to prepare our minds from today. Any such preparation will of necessity be incomplete and liable to change, so that we may fit in with a changing environment. There must be very few indeed the world over who can doubt that we are seeing today the end of the world, politically, economically and socially speaking, as we have known it. An English author, Gerald Heard,² has divided up world history into two periods: from the earliest times to 1939, and 1939 onwards. We are not sure of the exact date of division that he has given, but so far as we remember it was 1939. This division was meant to bring out dramatically the fact that an epoch has closed and we are struggling on the threshold of a new epoch.

It is difficult for most of us who live at this crisis of world history to appreciate the full significance of events as they happen all around us. We think too much in terms of a dead past, just as the British Government is blind enough to continue to think in terms of a dying empire. And because we think so, we cannot solve our problems nor open the

1. Wardha, 6 July 1942. Unsigned editorial written for *National Herald*. We are giving here the version available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1889-1971); his works include *The Social Substance of Religion*, *The Emergence of Man*, *The Source of Civilization*, *Is God Evident?*, *The Human Venture*, *The Five Ages of Man*, and *These Hurrying Years*.

door of the future. It is not the old and rusty key of the past that we have known that will open this lock. So we argue and talk about things which have little meaning in terms of the future—Pakistan, Dominion Status, Indian states, and so on and so forth. The most revolutionary-minded among our people behave as if revolution consisted of big slogans, or possibly violence. They have become, in spite of their phrases and slogans and the old type activities, the true conservatives of the present age, who refuse to change though the world about them changes. It is extraordinary how slow the human mind is to adapt itself to changing conditions. These objective conditions are always far ahead of the human mind, except in the case of a few choice spirits who can see with clear vision into the present and into the future.

For a supreme example of this lag of the human mind we must go today to the British Government. There is nothing so amazing as the way this government and the people who support it continue to function in terms of some generations ago. Their agents in the Government of India even excel their superiors, living in turmoil and yet almost unaware of the tumult of life, they talk of Empire when that Empire has tottered all about them. It is only when the full realisation of this fact comes to the British Government that they will make themselves fit to carry on this War as it should be carried on. Till then they will remain in a morass, helplessly trying to extricate themselves from the reality of the present which they have so far refused to understand.

But it is not good enough for us to criticise others. We must look deep into ourselves. We live in many ways in a world of unreality and spend our time and energy over trifling happenings, forgetting the reality behind it all. That reality is the future that is slowly and inevitably taking shape in the present. That shape is vague and amorphous and appears to be ever changing. Nevertheless it is taking shape and it may be possible for us to control to some extent that development. In any event a vital and living nation cannot allow itself to be a passive plaything of fate. Therefore, while we are engaged in the present, we must also think of the future, what it is likely to be, what we would like it to be, what we must try to make it.

With this object in view we have invited an eminent publicist and economist³ to write a series of articles for the *National Herald*. The writer, though well known, has preferred to write under a *nom de plume*,⁴ because he wants people to consider what he has written on its own merits. We hope to publish these articles twice a week in the *Herald*

3. K.T. Shah.

4. These articles were, however, not printed in the *National Herald*.

and we invite the special attention of our readers to them. We would further invite our readers to send us their criticisms and their own ideas on the subject dealt with in these articles.

We hope thus to turn public attention, to some extent at least, even in the present with its inexorable demands on us, to the vital issues before this country and the world.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

1. Detention Without Trial¹

Mighty events shake the world and their repercussions reach India. But whatever may happen to the world or to India our old problems pursue us and those in authority in India continue to function in their own limited and perverted ways. One of these problems which is a source of continued irritation to the public is that of the detention without trial of a large number of individuals. In many instances it is difficult even to guess the reason for such detention. In other cases the apparent cause has ceased to exist and the reason for detention no longer applies. But however all this might be our young men continue to remain in prison. Possibly civil liberties have to be limited to some extent in war time, but any limitations by a foreign government can never be accepted, for its outlook is foreign and its motives always suspect. Even apart from this, there are larger considerations which should have gone to demonstrate the unwisdom of this policy of keeping large numbers of young men indefinitely in prison. The ostensible purpose for doing so is itself defeated by this act.

I welcome the conference that the Punjab Civil Liberties Union has organised² to draw particular attention to the subject. In the Punjab, even more than in the rest of India, strange things happen and we have seen or read about some of these very strange happenings even in recent days. I think it is essential for us to keep these detenus and political prisoners in mind and to demand their release or, at any rate, the trial of the detenus in courts of law. Many of them have already spent years in prison and we have been helpless spectators of their long continued incarceration. I trust that the day is not distant when they will emerge from prison and see the end of that system which has sought for these long years to suppress them in every way.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 5 March 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 9 March 1942.
2. The All India Civil Liberties Conference called by the Punjab Civil Liberties Union was held on 8 March 1942 under the presidentship of N.M. Joshi. The conference in its resolution demanded immediate release of all prisoners detained on account of their political views without trial.

2. The Suspension of Newspapers¹

The order of the Bengal Government prohibiting the publication of the *Yugantar*² and the suspension of other newspapers by the respective provincial governments³ seem to me monstrous and even from the military point of view undesirable.

I should personally imagine that these orders will greatly help the Japanese Government and give them more information about the state of affairs in India than any petty item that might have appeared in the press. I do not know about the military significance of any particular news item published so far but as far as I know Calcutta papers have toed the line of the Press Censor.

I am sure that names of certain places are omitted by the Calcutta press but even if they had been mentioned, you could call it at the most an error.

The position in India has become increasingly grave because of the British Government functioning on two fronts—against the Axis powers and to some extent against the Indian people. If this is the idea of the Viceroy's National War Front—it is not our notion—and this sort of dealing with the press and individuals continues, I do not know what is going to happen. I can say with certainty that a campaign is being carried on by the government against the Indian people. This is a curious way of raising popular enthusiasm for the War. Obviously the mentality of the government differs greatly with our mentality and it is not surprising that even a person like Sir Stafford Cripps should be so far removed from us in ideas. It is a pity that this should be so, for world events and coming perils should have been enough to teach them many a lesson but some people seem to have got past the learning stage.

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 25 April 1942. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 26 April 1942.
2. On 21 April 1942, the Government of Bengal, under the Defence of India Rules, directed the *Yugantar*, a Bengali daily of Calcutta, to suspend further publication.
3. On 22 April 1942, the Bombay Government ordered suspension of the publication of *The Bombay Sentinel* for 31 days and on the same day the Punjab Government served an order on the *Pratap*, an Urdu daily, to submit to the Special Press Adviser, for scrutiny before publication, all matter, including headlines.

3. The Punjab Order on the *Pratap*¹

Two and a half weeks ago, as I was returning from my Assam tour, I learned of the suppression by various provincial governments of three well-known newspapers: the *Yugantar* of Calcutta, *The Bombay Sentinel* and the *Pratap* of Lahore. Soon after, the order against the *Yugantar* was withdrawn, and I understand that the *Sentinel* is also coming out now. But the order against the *Pratap* continues.

During my present visit to Lahore I have had occasion to see this order against the *Pratap*. This is a remarkable document for anyone who knows anything about the working of newspapers. It enjoins censorship of every matter, including headlines, connected with the War, the international situation, internal security or civil defence measures in India or any other matter relating to the measures for the prosecution of the War taken by the government. The censorship is to take place during office hours on working days only by the Special Press Adviser.

This is a very remarkable order and only the clogged and panicky brain of the Punjab Government could have devised it. It is obvious to even a tyro in journalism that no daily newspaper can possibly be published under these conditions and restrictions. Further, no intelligent reader wants to read what the Special Press Adviser wishes to impose upon him. It is added that no reference of any kind must be made in the paper that any news, article, photograph or drawing will be or has been submitted for examination to the Special Press Adviser or has been withheld or in any way curtailed, altered or modified by him. Evidently, the Press Adviser is a shy and retiring individual and wants to hide his shining light under a bushel. He wants all the credit for his work to go to the editor.

The editor and publisher have very rightly refused to issue the paper subject to the conditions. There was no other honourable and sensible course open to them. To accept such conditions is to dishonour the profession of journalism and befool and betray the public.

We have got bored and tired with the incompetence in every respect of our provincial and Central Governments. It is trying to be ruled by persons who do not even possess a minimum of intelligence and efficiency. And yet the monstrosity of this order amazes one. I am told that the Standing Committee of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, that very sedate and respectable body, sent a journalist to

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 12 May 1942. *The Hindu*, 14 May 1942.

the Punjab Government asking for a withdrawal of the order. They met with a refusal and a demand that the *Pratap* should support government policy.

It does not, I suppose, strike the Punjab Government that they have thus insulted not only the entire press in India but also the public. Do they expect newspapers to be a gramophone for the public performances of the Press Adviser, or apologists for all the incompetence and inefficiency which have become the hall-mark of our provincial and Central Governments? This is an intolerable situation.

4. Reply to Sikandar Hayat Khan¹

I owe it to the Punjab Premier and to myself to issue a rejoinder to the remarks he has made in answer to my statement about the *Pratap* case.² The Premier has stated that what I have said, bristles with misstatements of the fact, and further that it is a malicious untruth to say that he (the Premier) suggested to the emissary of the press committee that the *Pratap* should support the policy of the Punjab Government.

It would have been more helpful if the Premier had pointed out exactly what the misstatements were. He has not attempted to do so except in regard to the suggestion made to the emissary of the press committee. The principal fact I was concerned with was the order served on the *Pratap*. This is, I believe, public property and each person can judge for himself whether my criticism was justified or not. The Central Committee of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, which consists of both Indian and English editors, unanimously condemned this order.³ *The Civil and Military Gazette* of Lahore which cannot be charged with any bias for Indian nationalism or freedom calls it obnoxious. I shall be glad to know from the Premier if he thinks that it is possible to issue any daily newspaper in the terms of his government's order.

1. Statement to the press, Manali-Kulu, 17 May 1942. *The Tribune*, 19 May 1942.
2. On 13 May 1942, Sikandar Hayat Khan had issued a rejoinder to Jawaharlal's statement.
3. The Standing Committee of the All India Newspapers Editors' Conference condemned the order at its meeting held on 6-8 May 1942 as provocative and added "that such disproportionate and drastic action can only result in the alienation of the sympathy and goodwill of the press."

I shall further be grateful to him if he will enlighten me about the misstatements which according to him abound in my previous statement. The Premier has specifically denied having asked for an assurance that the *Pratap* should support the policy of the government. I am glad to have his denial but unfortunately others besides me were labouring under the same delusion.

I received my first information on this subject in Delhi and this was derived from a telegram received from Lahore by the President⁴ of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference after the interview with the Premier. When I came to Lahore this was confirmed in the course of a letter conveying the result of the interview with the Premier. An eminent English editor wrote to the publisher of the *Pratap* as follows: 'He, the Premier, declared himself willing to rescind the order against the *Pratap* only on an assurance from the *Pratap* undertaking to fall in line with the Punjab Government and public opinion in the province regarding the war.' My own necessarily limited knowledge of a foreign language prevented me from appreciating the essential difference between supporting the government policy and falling in line with the Punjab Government but I should have hoped that in any event this linguistic difference did not proceed from malice.

The Premier has reminded me of my failings and of how unworthy I am to be the son of my father. I appreciate his gentle admonishing realising fully as I do that I err frequently and in many ways but I have the satisfaction at least to be conceited and arrogant in a right cause. Inefficiency and incompetence in high places irritate me and it is notorious that New Delhi has become their chosen abode. The Punjab Government walks more and more in the long shadow of the Imperial Capital. In my previous statement I made no reference to the Punjab Premier or to any other individual. I referred to that impersonal thing known as government. I did not even know what part the Premier had played in this matter nor did I accuse him personally of anything. If the Premier wishes to assume full responsibility for the order on the *Pratap* and subsequent occurrences connected with it, I have no desire to deprive him of that honour.

4. Kasturi Srinivasan (1887-1959); Editor, *The Hindu*, 1934-59; President, All India Newspaper Editors' Conference, 1940-44.

5. Continuance of the Order on the *Pratap*¹

On my return to Lahore today I have seen the second statement issued by the Punjab Premier about the *Pratap* case.² Perhaps it is more correct to say that the statement is about me, as, unfortunately, I figure more in this connection than the *Pratap*. I have no desire to discuss so personal a matter, as the subject is a distasteful one to me, and, in any event, I can hardly look upon myself objectively. For all the good advice that the Premier has, quite unsolicited, given to me I am duly grateful and I hope that I shall profit by it. It will be my misfortune if I cannot live up to the high standard that is required of those who may have to deal, directly or indirectly, with the Punjab Government's activities.

But it does not really matter what I am, for individuals should not count in a discussion of a public issue. Even the *Pratap*, as such, has only secondary importance. The real issue was and is how a government should treat the press. Was the order passed on the *Pratap* a proper order, and is its continuance justified?

The Premier stated previously that my first statement bristled with misstatements, and, in particular, one remark was a malicious falsehood. I have carefully considered his list of such misstatements and falsehoods. As far as I can make out, there are two mentioned by him. The first is my statement that the request made on behalf of the All India Newspaper Editors' Conference was rejected by him. This, the Premier says, is incorrect because he sent a long telegram³ to Mr. K. Srinivasan. May I inquire whether it is not a fact that the request was refused, and the refusal persists even now? The sending of a telegram or any negotiations that might have taken place in between do not make the slightest difference to the final fact of refusal. The fact that the order against the *Pratap* still continues is itself final evidence of that refusal. I must

1. Statement to the press, Lahore, 21 May 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 22 May 1942.
2. In a press statement issued on 20 May 1942, Sikandar Hayat Khan asserted that Jawaharlal was misinformed by interested and biased partisans.
3. In his telegram Sikandar Hayat Khan explained the position of the Punjab Government and held that his government was forced to take that step and that every reasonable effort would be made to mitigate the rigour of pre-censorship.

confess that I have failed to discover anything even remotely resembling a misstatement in what I said. It is true that I did not refer to certain correspondence or negotiations. They made no difference to my final conclusion.

The second misstatement, which is also in addition said to be a malicious falsehood, is my remark that the government demanded of the *Pratap* that it should support the government's policy. What the government actually did was to ask the *Pratap* to fall in line with the government's policy in regard to the War. I appreciate the difference, but I am amazed that the Premier should not realise that policy in regard to the War covers almost every conceivable thing that is important today. In war time there is no essential difference left between a government's general policy and its policy in regard to the War. The latter governs, or should govern, if a war is properly conducted, everything. Certainly, I was not thinking of the price of potatoes or any such matters when I wrote my first statement. I was thinking definitely of war policy and all its far-reaching consequences. It covers a multitude of errors and absurdities; it is the parent of the Defence of India Act and its ugly progeny the Defence of India Rules; it leads to internments without trial; to enforced war contributions; to exorbitant salaries and allowances to officials; and to a hundred and one other unsavoury consequences.

If this is a malicious falsehood and this is the list of misstatements which are said to have abounded in my statements, it is obvious that the Premier's standards of public criticism and his choice of language are very different from mine.

But the real question still remains. Was the order on the *Pratap* justified? I repeat that it was a fantastic order, impossible to obey. This has nothing to do with what the Premier thinks of the *Pratap*. Every journalist and, I venture to say, every reasonable and responsible person considers the order and its continuation obnoxious. Why not deal with this matter directly instead of dealing with personalities?

6. To Shaukat Usmani¹

Allahabad
June 12, 1942

Dear Shaukat Usmani,²

I received your letter³ some time ago. Since then of course much has happened and I believe some detenus have been discharged because of their sympathy with the Russian cause. If that rule is applied, there is no reason why you should not be discharged. I do not know what you have done in the matter. If you so wish it, you can write to government direct on the subject. I do not think the question of parole arises, though perhaps you know better. I am sorry I cannot help you, but you will realise that as I am in conflict with the government, my advice to them is of little value. In any event I hope that you will keep a stout heart. World conditions are changing rapidly and no one knows what will happen.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1901-1978); member of the Communist Party; one of the main accused in the Kanpur and Meerut Communist Conspiracy Cases; author of several books in Urdu and English, including *Peshwar to Moscow* and *Historic Trips of a Revolutionary*.
3. In his circular letter addressed to some top leaders of India, Usmani informed them of his notice to the British Government that he would undertake a fast if he was not allowed on parole to go and fight for the Soviet Union.

7. Internments and Externments¹

We have long been used to internments and externments. But now we have a new version of them, far-reaching enough in its consequences. I am told that every person holding a motor driving license has been served with an order to hold himself in readiness to serve as a driver for the military or civil authorities. Further that he must not go out of his particular area without special permission. This order has been served on professional drivers as well as on owner drivers.

I am not personally affected by it as I have not possessed a motor-car for the last ten years or so, when my car was seized by the police. Nor

1. Article written by Jawaharlal for *National Herald* on 30 June 1942.

have I renewed since then my licence for driving. But many of my friends are affected and so are large numbers of others.

This is conscription as well as a kind of internment. It is hardly possible for business or professional people to submit to it without grave dislocation of their work. During war this has to be endured in many ways, and certainly no car owner or driver can refuse his service to save human life or relieve suffering. But we know too well how cars and their drivers were commandeered in Rangoon and elsewhere and for what purposes these cars were used. Even in this, racial discrimination was rampant, and a selfishness on the part of those in authority which astonishes. That kind of a thing is not going to be endured or tolerated in India, except by some faint-hearts who are capable of tolerating everything except courage and self-respect.

The whole position in India is topsy-turvy and hence everything that the present government does is suspect and is likely to lead to bad results. A national government of a free country must of necessity pay attention to the needs of the people and carry them with it. There is no such compulsion on a foreign government and it seldom thinks that the human beings affected by its orders can also suffer.

It is clear that, conscription or no conscription, no Congressman can carry out any directions which offended against the Congress policy of dissociation with the war effort.

If some people are being interned in this way, far greater numbers have been, and are being, externed. Perhaps military necessity may justify the acquisition of certain villages or rural areas, but no such necessity can justify the sudden dispossession of people from their lands and huts without ample notice, full compensation, transport arrangements and provision of new houses and land. In cities old residents are being made to leave their houses at short notice. It is odd that military necessity always points to the dispossession of an Indian from his house. I have not yet heard of any of our higher European officials having to do so, although their houses are usually bigger and more roomy.

In New Delhi there is a scarcity of housing accommodation. The Americans, the Chinese and others require houses for their offices and staffs. The obvious thing to do was to put the Viceroy's House to some useful purpose, as also the large houses of the higher officials, who could move into smaller houses. That applies to government houses everywhere and especially in Lucknow and Allahabad. These spacious buildings will have to be put to better use in the near future in independent India. So it is as well to get used to this now.

GENERAL

1. To Mian Iftikharuddin¹

Bombay
December 18, 1941

My dear Ifti,

I have your letter of the 16th December.² I have just returned after addressing two enormous mass meetings totalling an audience of a lakh and a quarter, and I am a little tired. But I am sending you this reply. For if I do not do so now I may have less time in future.

1. I am aware of the Friends of the Soviet Union in Calcutta. After my release from prison an effort was made in Allahabad to start such an organisation and a similar effort is being made in Benares, Lucknow, etc., chiefly University centres in the U.P. The idea was to issue a manifesto from each of these places and then to develop an organisation out of the signatories. It seemed to me and to most others that the whole object of these manifestoes and organizations would be frustrated if they were largely confined to those who may be considered as confirmed and well-known friends of the Soviet Union. The point was to get the average intellectual, professional, professor, etc. When the Allahabad manifesto appears,³ my name will of course be in it. But such importance as that manifesto will have will consist of other names, and it seems to me far better for these other people to be in the forefront of these organizations.

Personally I rather doubt if it is desirable at present to have any all India organisation. The All India Committee you refer to is so in name only and any attempt to impose itself on people elsewhere is not likely to meet with success. I think it is far better to encourage the formation of local groups and then connect them rather loosely. Later these groups may elect an All India Committee. To start from the top is a wrong way and an artificial way and will come in the way of a natural

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter he requested Jawaharlal to become the chairman of the All India Committee of the Friends of the Soviet Union, proposed to be formed as per the resolution of the Friends of the Soviet Union, Calcutta. He asked Jawaharlal for the convenient dates and place for a meeting to elect him formally as chairman. Further, he requested Jawaharlal to attend the Patna session of All India Students Federation and help in uniting the two student factions.

3. The manifesto, adopted by, U.P. Provincial Committee of the Friends of the Soviet Union, issued on 26 December 1941, admired the heroic resistance of the Soviet people against the German aggression and recalled their progress and their achievements in the spheres of peace, women upliftment, health, culture and development of nationalities.

growth. In this view the question does not arise of my being the chairman of an All India Committee. In any event I do feel that the chairman should be one who is not an aggressive politician. We can of course associate ourselves with the committee.

2. As for the Students Federation, I am a little fed up with their quarrels and schisms. I have just been asked to give a message for the conference which is going to be presided over by Meherally.⁴ Possibly I might give a message but this is likely to consist of criticisms. Frankly speaking I am not interested in the new attitude of the students which chiefly consists in talking tall, criticising the Congress, discussing fine points of ideology, and doing nothing. This of course is not a new development and I have watched something like this for the last two or three years. One must of course attach importance to students but I refuse to attach importance to people who do nothing and talk tall, whether they are students or others. I suppose the student world is going through some kind of inner crisis which will pain them a lot and out of which they will learn something. I should of course like you and Meherally to try to put an end to this schism. If you succeed, well and good. I do not think it is right or desirable for me to interfere. Partly I have no time for this kind of thing, partly I have no mood for it. They must gain my respect a little before they expect my time. Our students seem to me to be quite singularly rigid in mind and repeating set formulas and slogans without troubling to use their brains. Most of these formulas and slogans are dead and done with and have no application today. I suppose sometime or other they will realise this. It will be time enough then for me to try to help them. If anyone wants to see me in Allahabad, I shall gladly meet him. But it is neither good for me nor for them that I should go to Patna or anywhere else especially to smooth their ruffled hair and repeat platitudes.

You were of course quite right in writing about these matters to me because they are important. I hope, however, that you appreciate my viewpoint.

I am enclosing a copy of the message I am giving to the All India Students Conference to be presided over by Meherally.⁵ This is, as

4. The seventh session of the All India Students Conference was held at Patna by two rival groups separately. One group held its conference on 27-28 December 1941, presided over by Yusuf Meherally. The other group held its conference on 29-30 December 1941, presided over by Mian Iftikharuddin. It was alleged that the first group was under the inspiration of the Congress Socialist Party.

5. See the succeeding item.

you will notice, an odd kind of message and if you care to use it at your conference, you can do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Message to the All India Students Conference¹

I understand that an All India Students Conference is going to be held at Patna soon and that this will be presided over by my friend Yusuf Meherally. I have been asked to give a message of good wishes for this conference. Students of course have my good wishes always. And yet I have hesitated to give this message as some news reached me, through the newspapers, in prison about squabbles and schisms in the student world. I did not try to follow what happened as such disputes did not interest me. But I gathered enough to be distressed. It seemed to me bad enough that students in India even in ordinary times should be behaving as political parties have been behaving. But it was infinitely worse that at a time of national and world crisis relatively trivial matters should create splits and rouse passions. It is always a test of a nation, a group and an individual, as to what it or he considers the first essentials. If secondary matters are given the first place, that nation, group or individual becomes secondary and counts for little. For students it is obvious that the bonds that should link them and the general national approach that should bind them together, are such that there can be hardly two opinions in regard to them. On it there could easily be unity and effective work, giving freedom for individual expression of opinion on other matters. If students forget their own job and consider themselves as the final judges of the nation's activities and split on that issue, they are perfectly welcome to do so, but they are not likely to advance their own interest or the national interest in this way. In this world of prejudices and horrors, none of us can afford to make catchphrases and slogans take the place of reasons and consecutive thoughts. Slogans are useful and desirable but they are dangerous companions for those who wish to use their minds and their intellects.

1. Bombay, 20 December 1941. *National Herald*, 28 December 1941.

I do not know about the merits or demerits of the students' organisations that exist today and am quite unable to express my opinion on them. But I am well acquainted with the background and so I can presume to form an opinion based on general principles.

I am told that there is another students' organisation called the All India Students Federation and that this organisation is also holding some kind of a conference soon in Patna. Mian Iftikharuddin, a friend and a colleague, is, I understand, expected to preside over this conference. Thus both the prospective presidents of the two students' conferences are comrades of mine whom I respect. It seems odd to me that two such friends and comrades should be associated with rival organisations. It seems to me that it should be their first job, as well as that of the students, to put an end to this unseemly state of affairs. Possibly they may find it difficult today under the existing conditions. Possibly also it is better for the student world to learn through its own experience. Till they have so learnt, I am afraid they cannot expect much sympathy or help from outsiders who otherwise wish them well and would gladly cooperate with them.

I have ventured to express my opinion frankly to the students for there is little point in my repeating unmeaning platitudes. I am sure they will appreciate my frankness even though they may not agree with all what I have said. We dare not delude ourselves in these critical times by adopting any course or line of thought that evades the real issues.

Again I repeat that I wish well to the students, for after all the burden of the future rests with them. What they do today is of relatively little importance, except in so far as it prepares them and lays the foundation for future work. For them tomorrow is more important than today. If they wish to make tomorrow theirs, they will have to develop the methods of work and qualities which will bring them this heritage, or else others will pass them by, while they are in hue and dispute, and take the leadership of tomorrow.

3. Jamnalal Bajaj¹

As I mounted the dais of the public meeting held yesterday I heard the news of Jamnalalji's death. I refused absolutely to believe it. How

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 12 February 1942. *National Herald*, 13 February 1942.

could he be dead, I thought, when only a few days ago I had met him and found him full of life and vitality and of the many problems of public affairs that filled his mind and to which he had dedicated his life. Yet I could not continue in my unbelief, for confirmation of the news came from many sources. I was shocked beyond measure at the sudden blow and it was with difficulty that I addressed that great audience which had assembled to hear me.² While I spoke of other things my mind was often far away in Wardha which had so long been inseparably associated with Jamnalalji. For twenty-two years I had been closely associated with him in public affairs, in friendship and even in domestic affairs. In the Working Committee he was probably a member with the longest term of years of service. In many matters, both public and private, I turned to him for advice and guidance and it is difficult for me to realise that I can no longer avail myself of that dear friend's counsel. We have many politicians and men of note with fine records of service and public work. And yet Jamnalal Bajaj was unique amongst them and there is no other who can fit into his place. To lose him at this hour of grave crisis and peril is a hard blow difficult to bear.

2 See *ante*, pp. 467-470.

4. Foreword to "Larkharati Duniya"¹

The essays and writings included in this book were written by me during the last three, four years. In this fast changing world they have become outdated, but even so they might perhaps be able to help in understanding the problems of today. This book had come out last year when I was in jail. Generally people took it kindly and all the copies that were printed were exhausted. Hence it became necessary to get it printed again.

The essays included in it may be old or new, but the title of the book "Larkharati Duniya" is very appropriate and proper. Today we are living in a strange world whose old foundations have all got weakened and new foundations are not being laid. Some time or other they will be laid but it will be a different world as the present world is witnessing its last days. Many big empires fell before our eyes and are still falling. Every day the picture is changing. But the question is

1. Original in Hindi. Allahabad, 8 March 1942. *Larkharati Duniya* (Uncertain World), New Delhi, 1964.

whether we are also participating in this drama or are mere spectators. Now there is no room for spectators anywhere and those who want to escape they too cannot go anywhere. Where to escape and for what? Our work lies here and now.

One wonders how England and France cut up their own roots. In China and Spain and by the Munich Pact they discredited themselves and also became weak. At that time also what we used to say on behalf of the Congress with regard to these international problems have proved true and now England repents having committed those mistakes. Old mistakes are sometimes realised, still fresh mistakes are committed. One cannot get rid of them unless one's mind undergoes a change.

India is an example of these old and new mistakes. The British Empire is coming to an end here—it is bound to end—but even while coming to an end it is leaving behind numerous ills for us. So many troubles are surrounding us, so many difficult problems are confronting us. But in this tottering world all this is bound to happen. Then why should we complain? We raised the slogans of revolution and *inquilab*—that revolution has come to us now. Certain aspects of this revolution are good, some are bad, and some fearful, as it always happens with a revolution. How should we welcome it? By courage, bravery and unity and by forgetting our petty quarrels and controversies let us increase our stature and become big men, and then take up the big issues and solve them.

5. Message on Imam Husain Day¹

I am very sorry I am unable to join in the commemoration² to be held in Lucknow of the thirteenth centenary of the martyrdom of Imam Husain³ On the very day fixed for this I have to go to Wardha for the Congress Working Committee.

During the last few months many impressive gatherings have been held in various cities of India to celebrate this famous centenary. These

1. Allahabad, 9 March 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. It was held at Lucknow on 14 March 1942.

3. The martyrdom of Imam Husain, who died fighting in the battle of Karbala, fought in 680 A.D. against the forces of Yazid, is celebrated every year during the first ten days of Muharram.

gatherings have been remarkable for the variety of people who attended them, people of differing faiths or people of no particular religious persuasion, all gathered together to pay their homage to a great personality and to a great act of faith and self-sacrifice. Our differences were forgotten, our arguments were hushed, and we could all join together in friendship and comradeship, for a great man and a great act makes the whole world kin, and even the distant memory inspires.

I welcome therefore this celebration in Lucknow and I would have liked to join it. But as that cannot be I have to content myself by sending my good wishes.

Today, when we stand in the midst of mighty happenings and on the threshold of vast changes, it is well that we take heed from the signposts of history and draw strength from the great deeds of the past. For we shall require all our strength and courage and wisdom, and the capacity for rising above the petty arguments and dissensions of the moment, to the higher plane of united and brave action and sacrifice for the common good. May the example of Imam Husain inspire us to this end, and may it become not a memory of a great sorrow but rather of a great triumph, the triumph of the human spirit against overwhelming odds.

6. To Victor Hugo Sword¹

Allahabad
April 27, 1942

Dear Mr. Sword,²

I am sorry I have been unable to answer your letter of the 24th April earlier.³ As I told you in the course of our conversation, I see no reason why you should not accept a position which will help you in interpreting, in so far as you can, India to the many American representative men who have come or are coming to this country. It is unfortunate that there should be so much ignorance and misunderstanding of India in America. Any step taken to remove it is welcome. For my part I should like a greater appreciation and understanding of each other between India and America. We are very different in many ways

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. An American employed in India.

3. In his letter Sword sought Jawaharlal's advice whether he should join the American Technical Mission as a liaison officer.

but I believe that we can find many common grounds in thought and action. The force of events is throwing us together more and possibly the future may accelerate this process. And yet being together or seeing each other does not necessarily mean knowing or understanding each other. Many Englishmen have spent their lives in this country but for all practical purposes they have never been in India, or rather they have deliberately refused to open their eyes or minds to India. That perhaps was one of the inevitable consequences of our relationship to each other, for this prevented comradeship and understanding. I do not want this to happen with the Americans who come to India. I do believe that while we have a great deal to learn from America, there is much that America might learn also from India.

So far as I am concerned, therefore, you can certainly take up any position which will enable you to help our American friends in their understanding of India. I do not know, because of our brief acquaintance, what your own views and knowledge of India are. This after all is not based so much on factual knowledge but on a psychological and a spiritual understanding. But even in our short talk I felt that you had approached this question in a friendly way and had made contacts with many people all over India which no doubt must have helped you in gaining an insight into India's mind. What India was and is, is a question which even I find difficult to answer and I have wrestled with it for many years. She has innumerable facets and the more one knows her, the more one feels that there is much to know. There is so much in her today which is worthless and which must be discarded. But there is so much also which is of infinite value, and because of this as well as because of subconscious urges, I am attached to her with all my heart and soul.

I wish you success in your work. I shall be interested to learn about the college you spoke to me about.

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. Foreword to "Frontier Speaks"

Last year, as the days lengthened and summer approached, I received a message in Dehra Dun Jail from my young friend and comrade,

1. Allahabad, 5 June 1942. Mohammad Yunus, *Frontier Speaks* (Bombay, 1947).

Mohammad Yunus. He told me that he was writing a book about the Frontier and the people who lived there. He wanted me to see his manuscript when it was finished. Ever since my release from prison in December last I have had to shoulder heavy responsibilities and face difficult problems. But I found time to glance through the greater part of this manuscript.

As I read it, the long panorama of this land of story and legend and brave and reckless deeds came before me, and vivid pictures filled my mind. For who can forget the past of this borderland of ours, or the present which is so full of significance for India?

Yunus has written with the exuberance of youth, with pride in his heritage, and above all with an abounding love for his people. He has used harsh words occasionally and his judgments of the past and the present may be over-weighted and liable to criticism. I do not hold with all of them, but I think it is right that he should give expression to his own deeply-felt convictions in his own words, for he shares those convictions with the vast majority of the people of the Frontier. For us, living in other parts of India, it is important that we should know more about these people, how they feel and think and act, and the future they look forward to. For various reasons, and chiefly because of British policy, the Frontier Province, and even more the tribal areas, were long isolated from the rest of India and were supposed to be lands of mystery and violent deeds. A mental barrier, based on ignorance and fear, was deliberately built up by our foreign rulers, and a policy was pursued which not only resulted in continuous harassment of the tribal people and in vast expenditure of Indian money and resources, but, what was worse, is breeding ill will all round. That policy continues still; yet the barrier has already been pierced.

That barrier was shaken by the winds that blew all over India waking the masses from their long slumber and lethargy. The national movement spread from the wide plains to the mountain valleys and reached the narrow defiles of the Khyber Pass. That barrier was pierced ultimately by that remarkable man, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, whom his own people and we delight to call Badshah Khan and *Fakhr-e-Afghan*.²

When the history of the present day comes to be written only very few of those who occupy public attention now will perhaps find mention in it. But among those very few there will be the outstanding and commanding figure of Badshah Khan. Straight and simple, faithful and true, with a finely chiselled face that compels attention,

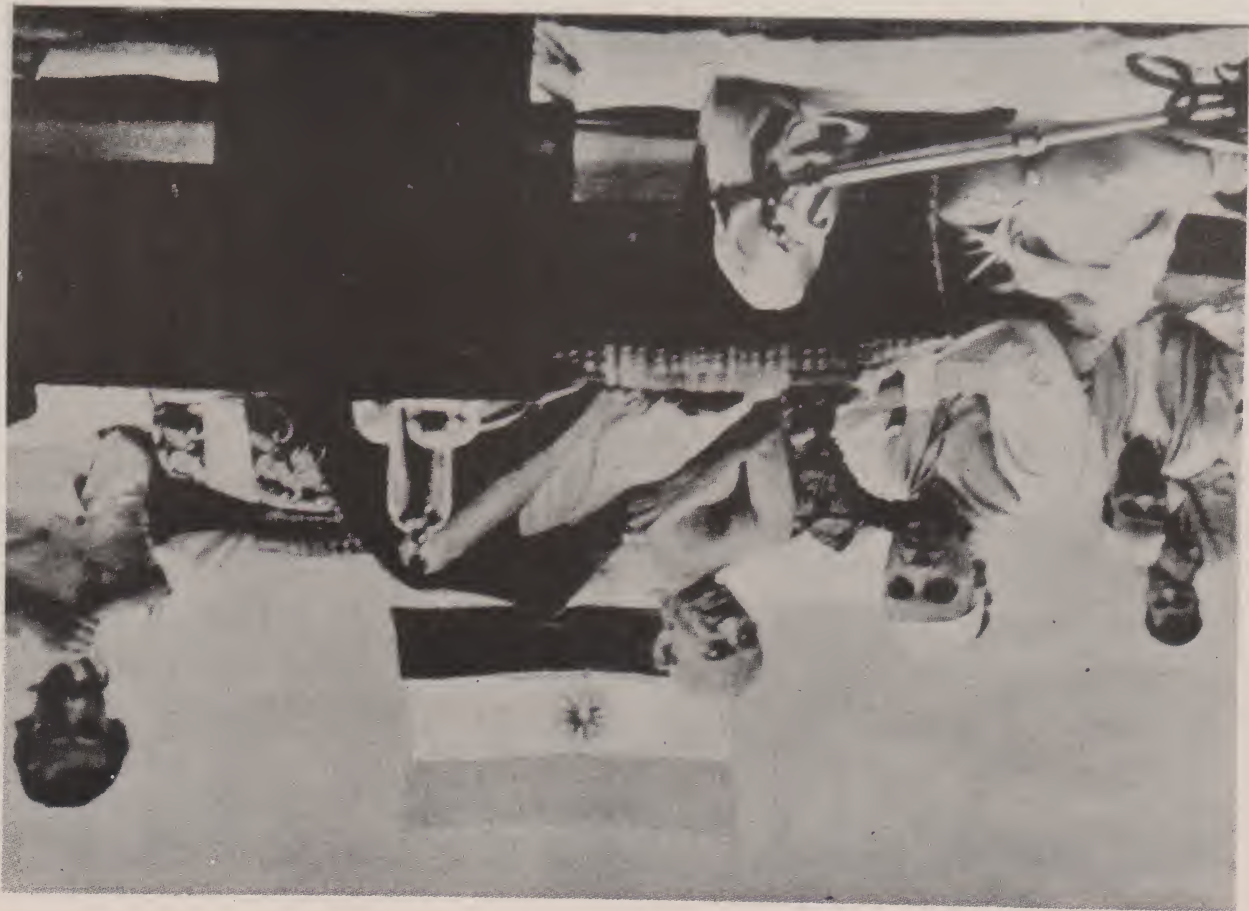
and a character built up in the fire of long suffering and painful ordeal, full of the hardness of the man of faith believing in his mission, and yet soft with the gentleness of one who loves his kind exceedingly. Watch him among his own people as they gather round him and look up to him with affection and admiration. He speaks to them in his well-loved Pushtoo, and though he may chide them often enough for their failings, his voice is soft and gentle and full of tenderness. Watch him again with little children with his eyes sparkling as he plays with them and his hard face resolving into frequent laughter.

This borderland of India may well serve in many ways as an epitome of India's past history. Here was the meeting place in the days of old for the three great cultures of Asia—the Indian, the Chinese and the Iranian. Here Greece met India in cultural fellowship and philosophical *camaraderie*. To its great university of Taxila came seekers after knowledge from many lands. Through that forbidding and yet inviting portal of India, the Khyber Pass, came many peoples and many races, bringing their distinctive contribution to India and yet ultimately merging themselves into the sea of Indian humanity. Centre of Indian culture for long centuries, this borderland country was so well-known throughout India that when brave expeditions went out from south India to colonise the islands and archipelagoes of the Eastern seas that envelop Malaysia, they took many a place name with them from the valley of the Kabul river.

But that is the history of long ago. I think of it again because this land is likely soon to become the meeting place of mighty countries and great movements. Its days of isolation are past and, though it is still industrially and educationally backward, a new life throbs through it, and all round it people are awake and astir. To the south there are of course their own countrymen of India; to the west, Afghanistan and Iran; to the north the Soviet Union with the beginnings of a new civilization; and to the north-east China. Out of the storm and stress of the present, the future already peeps out, a future when India will be closely associated with China, the Soviet Union and the countries of Western Asia. Our Frontier Province will again be their meeting ground and thus history will repeat itself but, as always, in a different way and on a different plane.

The problems that have afflicted the Frontier ever since British rule came to India already seem to be fading out. The forward policy of the British Government, which has brought so much misery to the tribal areas and which has prevented peaceful relations from developing, will hardly survive this Second World War. It has always seemed to me that a wise government, representative of and in touch with the people,

WITH MAHATMA GANDHI AND J.B. KRIPALANI AT A.I.C.C. SESSION, BOMBAY, 8 AUGUST 1942





could have easily made friends with these tribes and solved their problems. Sometimes I have thought that it was the British Government's deliberate policy to keep the Frontier in a state of ferment. However that may be, all these policies of the past will go into oblivion and a new chapter will begin. The old world dies, yielding place to the new, though what that new world is going to be is yet uncertain. Meanwhile for us in India, wherever we may live, in the Frontier or elsewhere, there is travail and heavy sorrow, and sometimes that darkness of the spirit which is more difficult to endure than physical pain.

I have written about Abdul Ghaffar Khan. There is nothing so surprising about our Frontier Province than the conversion of a warlike people to the doctrine of nonviolence. That conversion is, of course, far from complete and the Pathan does not worry himself about philosophical or metaphysical speculations. But it is patent that in action he has been remarkably nonviolent. The man who has loved his gun better than his child or brother, who has valued life cheaply and cared nought for death, who has avenged the slightest insult with the thrust of a dagger, suddenly became the bravest and most enduring of India's nonviolent soldiers. That was due undoubtedly to the influence of one man—Abdul Ghaffar Khan—whose word was almost law to his people, for they loved him and trusted him. The remarkable thing is that Badshah Khan, typical Pathan that he is, should have taken to nonviolence so earnestly and so thoroughly. He influenced thereby not only his own province but other parts of India also.

The future is dark with uncertainty all over the world. At India's threshold stand new invaders and the Empire that has so long dominated over us fades away. Curiously enough the Frontier Province, through which danger came in the past, is at present perhaps the farthest removed from risk of invasion, and the eastern borderland and the entire sea coast of India is the new frontier that is open to invasion. That in itself is significant of the way events are changing the face of things.

We are face to face with perils and dangers and no man can tell what the outcome will be. But in this perilous hour it is good to think of our comrades of the Frontier, brave men and true, who have marched with us so often through the valley of the shadow.

8. To Jagannath¹

Wardha
June 10, 1942

My dear Jagannath,
I have your letter.² I am interested to know that, having completed 20 years of membership of the Servants of the People Society, you have now taken up other work. I am glad that you are, doing labour welfare work now and I wish you success in it. This is a great field for useful work and I am sure you can do much. But the essential thing about labour, just as about the people in the country, is to make themselves self-reliant and not dependent on favours from others. This is the reason why all labour movements look with some suspicion on welfare work on behalf of the employers, and concentrate on developing strength and self-reliance through trade unions. Welfare work on behalf of the employers is of course good in itself, but it is often made an excuse and a means for discouraging workers' organisation. The kind of welfare work that the Ahmedabad Trade Union had done for its members is good as this is done by the workers themselves.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his letter of 6 June 1942, Jagannath informed Jawaharlal that he had taken up the post of labour welfare officer at the Delhi Cloth Mills.

9. Abul Kalam Azad¹

It is always difficult to write about a person one has come to know well. It is still more difficult when that person is a political colleague with whom one has shared the burdens and responsibilities of public work. And so I do not find it easy to write anything about Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

It was about 22 years ago when I first met the Maulana. Of course I had heard about him previously, of his great learning, of his integrity

1. Allahabad, 24 June 1942. Article written in *Aspects of Abul Kalam Azad*, Abdullah Butt (Ed.), (Lahore, 1942), pp. 31-43.

in the national cause, and of his internment during the last World War. So I was eager to see him. He was fairly young in years. And yet he had somehow the impress of maturity about him. Inevitably he took his place among the elders of the Congress, though he was much younger in years. I had occasion to see him and watch him from some distance, for at that time I was not intimately associated with the inner counsels of the Congress. In later years, I saw a great deal of him at work in the Working Committee of the Congress, and especially during the last dozen years I have been closely associated with him. Except for our long periods in prison and except for my absence from India, I have been in continuous touch with him in our day-to-day work in the Congress, as well as in the taking of weighty decisions. In Congress history, and therefore in recent Indian history, few people perhaps know what a great part he has played in shaping decisions. Whether as the President or as a member of the Working Committee, his opinion has carried very great weight with all the other members. This was so because more and more we came to recognise the ripe wisdom which lay behind those opinions.

The Maulana is an unusual type of politician. He lacks the usual temperament of a successful politician who becomes tough and insensitive and capable of giving and receiving hard blows. He is the very opposite of this. He is exceedingly sensitive and retiring. A fine and moving orator, he yet dislikes the rough and tumble of the crowd and it is no easy matter to get him to address public meetings. He is essentially the scholar whom circumstances have forced into a life of action.

He reminds me often of the French encyclopaedists who preceded the great French Revolution. His knowledge of past history is vast and all this is arranged in a well ordered way in his mind. One is continually astonished at odd bits of knowledge that come out of him most unawares. His mind is logical and precise and one would think that it had been trained in the old schools of formal logic and philosophy. His general outlook is rational. And yet with all this there is a human background which softens the weight of learning and shows itself in a rich, though sometimes dry, humour.

Probably if he had not been so retiring by nature he would have played an even greater part in the public life of our country, because he has it in him to move millions by his voice and his pen. We have heard that voice much too seldom in public, and unfortunately for many years his pen has not functioned as of old.

I have always regretted this neglect of the pen on his part. For the language he writes is full of winged words. Indeed it was through the pen that he became known, while he was yet in his teens, not only in

India but in the Arabic countries of Western Asia and Egypt. Even now a traveller in those Arabic-speaking lands is asked about Abul Kalam Azad. If he had carried on his crusade of the pen, what tremendous service he could have rendered to the cause of clear thinking and, therefore, right action, amongst our people.

Circumstances, however, forced him to shoulder other burdens and responsibilities. History will tell of how he did so. But we, who have had the privilege of close comradeship with him, need not await the verdict of history. He has been a tower of strength to us and to the country and whether one agreed with him or not, we always knew that his opinion mattered and could never be lightly brushed aside. For behind that opinion lay a keen and well-trained mind, knowledge of the past and of the present, and a ripe wisdom which is given to few.

The younger generation can learn much from this great Indian. He has found no difficulty in being a most learned of Muslim divines and at the same time an exponent and an emblem of India's unity. Lesser men have sometimes found conflict in the rich variety of Indian life. But he has been big enough not only to see the essential unity behind all that diversity but also to realise that only in this unity can there be hope for India as a whole and for those great and varied currents of national life which course through her veins.

10. Asia and America¹

It was a year ago or more, when I was in Dehra Dun Jail, that letter came to me from the editor of *Asia*, suggesting that I might become a contributing editor of *Asia*. I felt pleased and honoured at the proposal, for I was asked to join a noble company consisting of Pearl Buck, Lin Yutang and others who had distinguished themselves in the larger world which knows no frontier. Yet it was an odd request to a person in prison who had been sentenced to four years' rigorous imprisonment of which three and a half years were yet to be endured. And if, by any chance, I came out before my time was up, it was highly likely that I would be entangled in a mesh of public activities which left me no time for writing.

1. A message to *Asia*, a journal published in the United States, written presumably in June 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

So I wrote back to the editor and begged to be excused. But he was insistent and would not accept my refusal. A companion of mine in prison constituted himself as *Asia's* advocate and pressed me to agree. I wavered. I thought of how Asia and America were separated from each other, not only by a few thousand miles of ocean, but by traditions and mental processes which had their roots in a dim and distant past. How essential it was for them to understand each other and draw nearer to each other, more especially today when the world was in a crucible of change. Not to understand each other was to invite tragedy and disaster. To help even a little in this great work was worthwhile, and perhaps I could help. For I was a child of Asia, with her tradition in my blood, and with pride in her past and faith in her future, and I was foster-child of the Western world, knowing it fairly well and appreciating its great achievements. So I agreed, but with many a qualification.

These six months that I have been out of prison I have had to shoulder many a heavy burden and responsibility and my mind has been troubled and ill at ease. How to find a way out of this tangle, what advice to give to my own people, when every line of activity is full of risk and peril. I have not been afraid of risk and peril; they can be faced with assurance when the objective is clear. Life today hovers on the edge of death and we have to get accustomed to both. But if the future is not clear, the future we work for and possibly die for, then doubt and frustration fill the mind.

Copies of *Asia* magazine sometimes reached me and brought a breath of fresh air. I realised how, in its own way, this magazine was working for what I had in my own mind—the mutual understanding of Asia and America. I wished that its message could reach large numbers of people in both these continents.

Europe and America are obvious enough and their accomplishments and achievements stand out, as also their failings. But Asia is not obvious, especially to the Western mind, which seems to imagine that it has a monopoly of modern wisdom.

11. To D. N. Wadia¹

Wardha
July 8, 1942

Dear Prof. Wadia,²

Dr. K.L. Motwani³ has sent me several letters and has also seen me about certain suggestions of his. As he has been in correspondence with you also on the subject, you must know all about this. His chief proposal is that a National Academy of Social Sciences be established in India and various existing organisations might cooperate with this Academy.

Prima facie the proposal appeals to me greatly. I am convinced that a study of sociology as well as of all the other social sciences should be encouraged and coordinated in India. At the same time I am not clear as to how best this can be done. There is no point in starting a new organisation unless it is going to be a living one. There are already far too many half-dead organisations functioning spasmodically in India. I am not sure in my own mind if the people who run these organisations have the enthusiasm and vitality which are essential for such a task. If the same people are asked to undertake another job, not much can be expected of them.

I was wondering, however, if some kind of spade work might not be done in investigating the possibilities of this proposal. Dr. Motwani has written to all manner of folks in India and got agreeable replies from most of them.⁴ But this kind of pious sentiment does not help much. Nor do I think it would help much for a kind of conference to consider it. The only way to deal with it is for a small experts committee to consider the pros and cons as well as the ways and means, and to report. A decision can then be made.

I do not know if such a procedure is possible. I am suggesting it for your consideration.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Darashaw Noshervan Wadia (1883-1969); Fellow of the Royal Society; worked in the Geological Survey of India; Mineral Adviser to the Ceylon Government, 1939-45; later Director of the Indian Bureau of Mines, and Geological Adviser to the Department of Atomic Energy, Government of India.

3. Kewal L. Motwani (b. 1899); sociologist and educationist; author of *Manu: A Study in Hindu Social Thought*, *Sociology—A Brief Outline*, *Science and Indian National Reconstruction*, and *Science and Society in India*.

4. Motwani had written to Jawaharlal that the Inter-University Board of India had accepted his suggestion of including sociology in the university curriculum.

Whatever the difficulties might be in the way of giving effect to such a proposal in normal times, they are greater during these days of intense crisis when the future in regard to everything is entirely uncertain. Still if an idea is good it might be developed even though immediate effect cannot be given to it.

I am here in Wardha for another five days or so and then I shall go back to Allahabad.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

12. Lifting of Ban on the Communist Party¹

Q: What is your reaction to the decision of the Government of India to lift the ban on the Communist Party of India.²

JN: I am glad that the ban on the Communist Party has been lifted because I disapprove of all such bans but there is too much of a quid pro quo and a bargain about this matter. I do not, of course, agree with the present policy of the Communist Party. But I think it has been the height of absurdity and impropriety for the ban on the Communist Party to have continued for so many years in India. It is not by attempts at forcible suppression that the flow of ideas can be stopped, and the government ought to have realized this by this time. But the Government of India is not capable of realizing anything, new or old, outside its old ruts.

1. Interview to the press, Allahabad, 24 July 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 26 July 1942.
2. The Communist Party was banned in July 1934. The ban was lifted on 26 July 1942.

13. To Richard J. Walsh¹

Allahabad
July 25, 1942

Dear Mr. Walsh,²

I have been so occupied with other matters that I do not quite remember when I wrote to you last and what I wrote then. You will forgive me, I hope, for the delay in answering your letters.

Edgar Snow suddenly turned up here and gave me your letter. He then disappeared and later we found that he had been to China. I met him again some days ago at Wardha and I hope to meet him in Bombay next week.

I want to tell you and Pearl Buck that I am very greatly interested in the Chinese cooperative movement and I should like very much to have something like it in India. It is not easy to start cooperatives here on that basis because of government rules and regulations governing cooperative societies. Nevertheless the idea is spreading. I made an attempt to get Rewi Alley³ to pay us a visit to India, but this could not be arranged at the other end. Just at present we are tied up in many knots. As soon as an opportunity offers we shall try to develop these cooperatives in India. Edgar Snow has arranged for the publication in India of Nym Wales's book on Chinese cooperatives. I have contributed a foreword to it⁴ and Snow might possibly send you a copy of it.

I have been getting the recent numbers of *Asia* and I have liked them very much. There have been some really good articles in them. I wish more people in India could profit by them. Perhaps, but I am not sure, I might send you an article before long.

I wonder if *Glimpses of World History* has come out or not. I sent you a cable some time ago agreeing to your suggestion that the subtitle be changed.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. (1887-1960); husband of Pearl Buck; editor, Collier's Weekly, 1922-24; President, John Day Company, from 1926; editor, *Asia* magazine, 1933-46; his works include *Kid*, *The Making of Buffalo Bill* and *The Adventures of Marco Polo*.

3. (b. 1899); New Zealand industrial organiser in China, Chief Factory Inspector of the Shanghai Municipal Council, 1932-37; after Shanghai fell to the Japanese, he organised a chain of industrial cooperatives for the Chinese National Government throughout China.

4. See *ante*, pp. 568-571.

You wrote to me some time back and asked me if I had written anything in prison. I said in my reply that I had written something but this was unfinished. It has just struck me that even this unfinished material might be of some service to you. The book that I was writing was supposed to be a continuation of my *Autobiography*.⁵ But, as usual, it dealt with all manner of other subjects. There are some chapters dealing with India as a whole which might be of interest to *Asia's* readers.

I am, therefore, sending this manuscript to you separately by post. I do not know when it will reach or whether it will reach you at all. If there is any other way of sending it, I shall take advantage of it. When you get this, you can use it in any way you like for *Asia*.

With all good wishes to you,

Sincerely yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 11, pp. 753-802.

14. Rabindranath Tagore¹

I had hoped to be present at the Tagore anniversary meeting today but the fates have willed it otherwise. The Congress Working Committee is meeting this morning and I may not absent myself from it. I am sending these lines, however, to associate myself with the object of the meeting.

It is just a year ago that I heard in Dehra Dun Jail of Gurudev's death. Suddenly I felt very lonely for his mere presence in distant Santiniketan was an abiding comfort and an inspiration. The warmth of his genius surrounded me, as it did so many others, and produced in me a sense of companionship. To be deprived of this was loneliness and desolation.

And yet the sorrow, intense as it was, soon gave place to pride and triumph. It was well with India if she could produce, even in her present subject and lowly state, such a magnificent person. He was a great poet, a great artist, a great patriot, but he was above all a man

1. Message on the Tagore Anniversary, Bombay, 7 August 1942. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

of giant stature in a world of pigmies. That India should have produced him and another mighty personality, Gandhi, in the course of one generation filled me with wonder and the glow of pride in my country. It was well with India, I thought, for the springs of her youth had not dried up and her vital energy still flowed out to enrich the world. From what vast store did this come, and what was her strange secret which enabled her to renew her youth from age to age?

Tagore and Gandhi, each in his different way, was a symbol of India, steeped in her ancient culture and drawing strength and sustenance from her. How typical they were of India, and yet how utterly different from each other! Possibly no other country could have produced them, and they had their roots deep down in the Indian soil and their minds roamed over the many thousands of years that have gone to make India what she is. And yet they were men of the present day, intensely alive to the day's problems. Both of them, in their respective and wholly different ways, represented that wonderful continuity of India's cultural tradition which has known no break though disaster has so often laid her low.

Typical of India as Tagore was, yet he was typical also of the wide world today, as well as of the world of tomorrow. He showed us how India might be intensely national and yet, at the same time, international with her thought and sympathy embracing the world. In the midst of our national struggle, he created that symbol of internationalism that is *Visva Bharati*.

Standing on the edge of a precipice, as we all do today, my mind goes back to that great and magnificent message which Gurudev gave to his country and the world on his eightieth birthday. That was his last will and testament. Out of the store of his rich mind and experience, he gave that final message. In line with the ancient sages and great men of India, he spoke to us of our country's sorrow, at the crisis that had overtaken civilization in the Western world. As I read that message in prison it seemed to me that I heard the voice of India herself whispering in my ears. Today that message comes back to me and that lesson is imprinted in my mind. It were well if all of us, in Asia or Europe or America, paid heed to it for we are being swept away by the passions of the moment, and war, that great falsifier, is perverting and degrading our minds.

With reverence and pride in him and in India, I pay my homage to Gurudev.

1. To Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta¹

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

Dear Nellie,

Thank you for your little note.² I was on the point of coming to Calcutta to see the Maulana but now that he is coming this way I am not going. I hope however, sometimes or other, to visit Calcutta and see old friends there. Yes, I quite agree with you about the detenus. I think the treatment accorded to them has been scandalous.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In her letter of 5 December 1941, she welcomed Jawaharlal's release and hoped that the government would give a thought to the detenus and make a decent gesture by releasing them.

2. To C. Vijayaraghavachari¹

Allahabad
December 12, 1941

My dear Mr. Vijayaraghavachari,

It was a great pleasure to me to receive your letter and to recognise your handwriting.² I hope that you will soon get fit again.

The world is in a queer state and each one of us has a heavy burden. All we can do is to work our hardest for the causes which are worth while, both from the point of view of India and the world.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. In his letter of 5 December 1941, he welcomed Jawaharlal's release from prison and enquired about his future plans.

3. To Padmaja Naidu¹

In Railway Train
16.12.41

Bebec dear—Life is a difficult business and the dull routine of jail sometimes seems simpler and preferable. I am on my way to Bombay and Bardoli and already I have a feeling of suffocation and distress, for we are going to have a hard time there, and whatever happens, it is hardly likely to be too pleasant and agreeable to any of us.

Your mother wrote to me. Perhaps I shall see her soon. The thought of Eva's suffering and courage haunted me. Will you give her my love and greetings?

Indu is accompanying me. We shall be three days in Bombay and then Bardoli. Possibly I may come back to Bombay.

Love,

Jawahar

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

4. To Ghanshyam Das Birla¹

Allahabad
January 8, 1942

My dear Ghanshyam Dasji,

When in Allahabad I do not go out of my house very much but sometimes I have to go out. New difficulties are arising owing to the lack of petrol. Personally I do not possess a car but my brother-in-law, Ranjit Pandit, has one and I have the use of it. Even that is becoming difficult now because of the petrol situation. I, therefore, propose to revert to my old habit of using a bicycle. I do not want, as far as possible, to buy a foreign cycle. I had hoped to be able to get the New Hind Cycle but it does not appear to be available in the market. Could you kindly let me know where I can get it?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

5. On Indira's Choice¹

A report has appeared in the press about the engagement of my daughter Indira with Feroze Gandhi. As inquiries have been addressed to me on the subject, I should like to confirm this report. A marriage is a personal and domestic matter, affecting chiefly the two parties concerned and partly their families. Yet I recognize that in view of my association with public affairs, I should take my many friends and colleagues and the public generally into my confidence. I have long held the view that though parents may and should advise in the matter, the choice and ultimate decision must lie with the two parties concerned. That decision, if arrived at after mature deliberation, must be given effect to, and it is no business of parents or others to come in the way. When I was assured that Indira and Feroze wanted to marry one another I accepted willingly their decision and told them that it had my blessing. Mahatma Gandhi, whose opinion I value not only in public affairs but in private matters also, gave his blessing to the proposal. The members of my family as well as the members of my wife's family also gave their willing consent. Feroze Gandhi is a young Parsi who has been a friend and colleague of ours for many years and I expect him to serve our country and our cause efficiently and well. But on whomsoever my daughter's choice would have fallen, I would have accepted it or been false to the principles I have held. I hope and trust that this marriage will be a true comradeship in life and in the larger causes that we hold dear.

Mahatma Gandhi expressed a wish that the marriage might take place in Sevagram so that he might find it convenient to be present at it and bless the union personally. We appreciated and were grateful for his suggestion but the members of my family felt that the ceremony should take place in our home. The marriage will take place in about a month's time at Allahabad. At any time I am not in favour of the pomp and circumstance that so often accompany marriages in our country. In present circumstances, when national and international crises envelop us, this would be particularly inappropriate.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 26 February 1942. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 28 February 1942.

6. To K. Govinda Rao¹

Allahabad
March 1, 1942

Dear friend,

I have your letter of the 19th.² It is very difficult for me to advise you because in such matters one must decide for oneself. If you yourself felt strongly on the political ground either way, you should act according to your own feelings. If, however, you feel attracted towards the service you mention, I would not come in your way. Ordinarily speaking I would like our young men to be air-minded and to get experience of service in an air force. There are risks involved but that is the least part of the matter. We are placed in a particularly peculiar position. When we cannot do many things we want to in our own way and in order to do them we have to line up with others. In this matter I think that after full consideration of what your parents say, you should decide for yourself.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He wanted advice from Jawaharlal whether he should join the Royal Air Force on moral and political grounds despite his family's objection.

7. To P.A. Narielwala¹

Allahabad
9.3.42

My dear Pan,

I have been thinking of writing to you for a long time and at last I have sat down to it. The burdens of high polity &c. and though I must confess in a whisper that they do not crush me and I keep cheerful in spite of them. News from Bombay tells us that people there are excited. Why? Of course a noble excitement and generous enthusiasm are all to the good, but why all this nervousness and sneaking away? I think the best rule to follow is *j'y suis, j'y reste*.² I propose to follow it.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Here I am, here I stay.

Thank you for *Life*—But you need not trouble to send it in future. We are getting it direct now.

You know that Indu's wedding is coming off on March 26th. We shall expect you of course. You will get an odd kind of invitation card addressed in Hindi and Urdu to *Pyare Bhai*³—the new proud of Hindustani.

I am going to Wardha on the 14th and expect to be away for 6 or 7 days.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

3. Dear brother.

8. To P.A. Narielwala¹

Allahabad
13.3.42

My dear Pan,

Betty and the children reached here three hours late, which is not surprising as they started from Bombay two hours late. Stories from Bombay amuse and distress me. Why all this urge to run away? It is highly unbecoming and indeed foolish. Probably Bombay is a much sater place than many other places.

Betty tells me that there is a chance of Jehangir and Thelly coming here for Indu's wedding—also that he is not quite sure whether he is really expected to come. Of course I would like them to come. They need not worry about arrangements for their stay. We shall of course be crowded but that does not matter and we shall treat them as members of the family and put ourselves out for them. They will not mind I am sure. I do hope they will come.

As for you, you will share my room with me, as you have done before. I am off tomorrow to Wardha. Returning probably on the 21st.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

9. To Lachhmi Dhar Shastri¹

Wardha
March 16, 1942

My dear Lachhmi Dharji,²

I arrived here yesterday and I have consulted Mahatma Gandhi about the ceremony to be performed. Mahatmaji is of opinion that in the present instance in particular, as far as possible, normal procedure should be followed, minus unnecessary ceremonies. You know that for various reasons many people are objecting to this marriage. I have received a large number of letters on this subject and so has Gandhiji. This of course does not make any difference to our decision. But it does make it desirable to adhere to the normal procedure as far as possible and to avoid introducing special verses of a political character. These verses are of course not new and they are all from the old Vedic ceremony. Nevertheless some of these are not normally used during the marriage ceremony, and for us to use them at my daughter's wedding would make that ceremony slightly more unusual still. I am entirely with you that we should try to encourage the use of verses which proclaim national ideals, but perhaps it is desirable not to mix up two things at this stage. The marriage itself is in the nature of a reform and it is disapproved of by many conservatives. That is a big step and for the moment we should be content with that and not confuse the issue by bringing in a somewhat abnormal procedure in the ceremony.

I have given careful thought to this matter and I feel that Gandhiji is right. I think you will also appreciate this viewpoint.

Gandhiji also thought that we should not do anything during this ceremony which might indicate that we are out to vary the ceremony itself, except in so far as unnecessary parts may be eliminated. He was not in favour of publishing a pamphlet of the ceremony as this would indicate a desire to do propaganda in this behalf. The marriage itself is a great propaganda which is bound to affect large numbers of people. For the moment we should be content with that.

Gandhiji gave me a little pamphlet on the *Vivah Vidhi*³ which he had with him. There is of course nothing new in this but still I am

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (1891-1953); scholar of Sanskrit and of ancient Indian culture; lecturer at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, 1916-53; his works include *The Birth Place of Kalidasa*, *The Home of Aryas*, *The Aryan Sacraments*, *Bhajanawali*, *Parvati-Siksha*, *Mrityu Shok ki Shanti*.

3. *Marriage Procedure*.

enclosing it. Some parts of it, especially right at the beginning, are unnecessary.

I would beg of you to consider this matter afresh from the point of what Gandhiji has said and to draw up a note on the ceremony accordingly. This should include the essentials only and leave out unnecessary parts. As you wrote to me, I expect the ceremony to be performed in Sanskrit and Hindi.

The whole point of the ceremony is that a marriage is taking place between a Hindu and a non-Hindu. It so happens that a Zoroastrian is fairly intimately connected with some of the Vedic ceremonies because of a common origin. Nevertheless the fact remains that the marriage is between a Hindu and a non-Hindu and each party, from the point of view of religion, remains where he or she was before the ceremony. What the legal consequences of such a ceremony are is another matter in which I need not go into here. But the point is that the ceremony should be such as to apply fittingly to a Hindu and non-Hindu alike. This in itself would be setting an example which might ultimately effect reform and even legislation.

You were good enough to write to me that you would reach Allahabad on the 25th. If it is at all possible for you to come a day earlier, that is on the 24th, this would give us a little more time to settle up matters. I hope to be back in Allahabad by the 21st.

Yours very sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

10. To P.A. Narielwala¹

Wardha
17.3.42

My dear Pan,

Thank you for your letter which I have just got. Do not worry about yourself on where you will put up in Allahabad. You are in no trouble and you will simply share my room.

I have written to Jehangir. I would really like him and Thelly to come.

I agree with you about 'open town'. The idea of declaring a number of towns open is absurd. We might as well declare the country open.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Of course under special circumstances a particular town may be declared open.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

11. Public Acknowledgement of Congratulations¹

My daughter Indira and I desire to express our deep gratitude for the many messages of congratulations and good wishes that we have received during the last few days on the occasion of her marriage. A thousand telegrams have come and innumerable other messages from friends as well as those who honour us with their goodwill even though we do not know them personally. I am afraid it is not possible for me even to acknowledge these messages separately. That is made still more difficult by the demands made upon my time by political developments. As it happens also, I have not been keeping physically fit during these days so I must crave forgiveness of our friends and well-wishers and beg them to accept these thanks publicly conveyed. Their messages have heartened us and I am sure that this tremendous volume of goodwill will encourage and strengthen Indira and Feroze in that oldest of all yet ever new adventure of marriage which they have undertaken together.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 28 March 1942. *The Hindustan Times*, 31 March 1942.

12. To Stafford Cripps¹

New Delhi
April 7, 1942

My dear Stafford,

I have just received your note and I appreciate all you say in it as well as the urgency of the problem. I have been full of this problem all

1. British Cabinet Papers, CAB 127/73, Public Record Office, London. This hand-written letter was sent in reply to Cripps's personal appeal to Jawaharlal to save the Cripps mission. For Cripps's letter, see *A Bunch of Old Letters* (Bombay, 1960); p. 478.

these days and overburdened with all its implications. I have not given up hope that some light may come to us yet if not today or tomorrow then soon after. But I am convinced that it is beyond my power, even if I so wished, to get any considerable number of peoples to agree to the present offer. That is a tragedy for all of us. Yet the tragedy need not be anything final. You speak too much in terms of finality.

Whatever qualities and capacity I may possess will be devoted to meeting the situation that has arisen and in resisting such wrong tendencies as are taking shape in the country.

Ever yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

13. To Indira Gandhi¹

New Delhi
7.4.1942

Darling,

I have had no news from you, except for your telegram since I came here. I hope you are well and the growing heat of Allahabad does not trouble you too much. I expected to get away from here by tomorrow night but now I am not certain. We tussle daily with problems and they take new turns and put on new shapes. And so we go on from day to day and meanwhile War has reached India. Possibly I might get away from here by the 9th or 10th but I am not at all sure of what will happen. I am a little worried about you. Why should you hang up or postpone your programme because of me?

Madame Chiang wrote to me that she wanted to send you as a wedding gift something she had valued in her girlhood. I do not know what this is but she was trying to get it from some odd place.

The other day I met Shuaib Qureshi here and he expressed his sorrow at not having been invited to your marriage. I am sorry I missed him out. I remember his sending a telegram of congratulations. I would

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

like you to write to him and thank him for his good wishes. His address is: The Hon'ble Mr. Shuaib Qureshi, Minister, Bhopal, C.I. And now to work.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

You might also write a few lines to Sir Stafford Cripps to thank him for the good wishes he sent you through me. You will remember the letters he wrote. His address is: 3, Queen Victoria Road, New Delhi.

14. To G.P. Hutheesing¹

Allahabad
April 17, 1942

My dear Raja,

I received two letters from you in Delhi. Of course I would love to have you here working with me and whenever you feel like it you can come over. You have to judge yourself whether your work in Bombay at present is not more important. Obviously it has some importance and you are engaged in a useful job.

My own work is of such an odd character that it is very difficult for me to define it. It involves a fair amount of touring. I feel restless and my mind is continually searching for something to do. In these changing circumstances, I do not know what I might do a week or a fortnight later.

I am going today to Calcutta and from there to Assam on a short visit. The visit is going to be much too short as I have to be back by the 26th for the Working Committee meeting. Nevertheless I have decided to go because of that feeling of restlessness.

If you at all feel inclined to be here for the A.I.C.C. meeting come over for it.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

15. To Indira Gandhi¹

New Delhi
5/6-542

Indu Darling,

I have not written to you since I came here. Only a telegram to which you sent a reply. There has been heavy and exhausting work and complete uncertainty about my stay or the future. I stay on from day to day. As I see it now I am likely to be here till Wednesday night or possibly Tuesday night.

On my return to Allahabad I doubt if I can stay there for more than a couple of days for events in Bengal call me. I might even go to Assam.

I am worried about your staying on in Allahabad and delaying your departure for Kashmir. It depends of course on how you feel but it is best not to take risks.

Events are marching fast and are likely to overwhelm us within a few weeks. I must be in the thick of them for that is my job. But there is no reason why you should upset your holiday.

Raja is going to Bombay this morning (6th).

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

16. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
5.542

Bebbee dear,

So you have gone to the far south and I am off to the north and to the mountains. It is rather absurd to talk of going to the Himalayas for five days but the very idea makes a difference. I am sure I shall return freshened up, though possibly more cantankerous. We must, I suppose, go through these conflicts and try to swim across the raging torrents, though many may be sucked in by the whirlpools. I am going

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

to Kulu but I have a presentiment that even my brief stay there will be interrupted by new happenings.

Do not worry about me. I shall survive, not that it matters much either way. Gradually life is resolving itself into simpler, though broader, issues. These inevitably put an end to the period of eternal argument and interminable debate.

Look after yourself both for your own sake and for others' sake. And do not imagine that we are so far away or unlikely to meet for a long time. India is big but it grows smaller in a sense and throws us together again. I am returning the pictures.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

17. To Louls Fischer¹

Wardha
May 27, 1942

My dear Fischer,

On my arrival here last evening I went to see Gandhiji and I spoke to him about you. He would be glad to meet you, and almost any day will suit him provided he gets sufficient notice. I suggest that you write to his secretary, Mahadeva Desai, Sevagram, Wardha (C.P.), and tell him when you wish to come here. You might await his reply before coming.

I think it will be worth while for you to stay here for two or three days, not only to talk to Gandhiji at odd times but also to see his environment. You can stay at Wardha, which is a small town, and go daily to Sevagram, a village about five miles away. Or you can stay at Sevagram itself as Gandhiji's guest. The latter will be preferable and you will have greater opportunities of meeting him and seeing his surroundings. You will have to do without some of the so-called modern comforts and live more or less in simple Indian style. But you will not mind this. You will have to learn how to take a bath without a tub. In any event you will have to put up with the heat which one cannot escape at this time of the year. Wardha and Sevagram are hotter than Delhi but the heat is a dry one.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

I am going to Lucknow from here tomorrow morning and I expect to remain in Lucknow till the 31st night. Then for two or three days in Allahabad. Probably I shall return to Wardha about the 4th of June or so, though I am not sure of the date yet, as this depends on the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who will be coming with me. It might be desirable for you to be here when I am also here. This will have one disadvantage for you as much of Gandhiji's time will be taken up by us. On the other hand you can meet Maulana Abul Kalam Azad also.

Please write and let me know when you get this letter and what you intend doing. My address in Lucknow will be: 19, Station Road, Lucknow. After that Allahabad.

You will be interested to know that I found a copy of your new book, which you gave me, at Sevagram. Gandhiji's Secretary, Mahadeva Desai, had read it and another person, whom I should like you to meet, was in the middle of it. This person is Acharya Narendra Deva. (Acharya Means a Professor or something like it.) Narendra Deva is one of the leading Congress Socialists in India. Barring one person, Jaya Prakash Narayan, who is in prison at present, he is an intellectual, somewhat academical, and a very good speaker in Hindustani. Otherwise he has a reputation of being a straight and fine man. He has long been suffering from asthma and is at present having some kind of a nature treatment here. He does not live here usually and belongs to my province.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

18. To Indira Gandhi¹

Wardha
27.5.1942

Darling Indu,

I came here direct from Delhi. I felt that I must see Bapu as soon as possible even though for a short while. I am only here for a day and am going direct to Lucknow tomorrow morning. I shall be in Lucknow, from the 29th to the 31st night and then in Allahabad for two or three days. After that I return to Wardha, probably with the Maulana, and

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

stay here for a few days. From Delhi I sent my heavy luggage direct to Allahabad.

The journey was hot and the change from Kulu marked. I feel quite fit. Last evening I weighed myself here and found that I was 5 lbs. less than I was at Naggar. Partly this was due to absence of clothes.

In Delhi I met Louis Fischer (the man who was in Russia for many years as *Nation* correspondent). I shall probably see more of him.

At Delhi also I learnt of Ballo's return from a somewhat odd source. A certain Colonel or Captain Schuiter rolled up at Rajan's place on a motor bicycle and informed me that he had flown over with my nephew. He added that Lady Willingdon had sent me her love! Also that he was a Harrow man. He was a tall, Haw Haw type of a person.

I hope you had a good journey and are comfortably housed in Srinagar. Do not hurry back to the plains. It is better to get the full benefit of the change. On your way back, if it is possible, you might visit the Frontier Province and spend a day or two with Dr. Khan Sahib in Peshawar. You should of course see Abdul Ghaffar Khan also but I am more anxious about Khan Sahib. As you know, he has had a difficult time recently and has been surrounded by hostility.² Every manifestation of friendship and affection will be good for him.

Give my love to Ballo and remember me to Sheikh Abdullah.

Love,

Your loving,
Papu

2. See *ante*, p. 500.

19. Cable to Frances Gunther¹

4-6-42

Thank you for cables. Sorry for delay in answering them. Afraid unable to visit America now as present emergency demands my presence here. All good wishes. Love.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

20. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Sevagram
9.6.42

Bebie dear,

Your letter reached me here today. I have been in Sevagram two days and Maulana is due tonight. I expect to remain here another three or four days and then go to Bombay for a brief visit. Things are warming up in my province and many of my colleagues are in prison. I do not know what fate awaits me there. Anyway fate is performing strange tricks for all of us and they are likely to be stranger still in the future. It serves little purpose to be angry with it. I have had a very difficult time and have gone through much mental travail.

My thoughts, need I tell you, are with you and I am terribly worried about your ill health. You will do of course whatever you think is right. You know best. But please do keep me informed of your health.

I have given a brief note of introduction for your mother to Louis Fischer, the well-known American journalist who was in Russia for a dozen years. He is quite an interesting man. He has spent a week at Sevagram. He intends going to Hyderabad tomorrow. His latest book is *Men and Politics*, a kind of autobiography.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

I write to you briefly, for long years ago I gave up writing the kind of letters I would normally have written. It is no fun to know that all one's private and personal letters are read by a battery of censors. I reacted accordingly twenty years ago and I doubt if I have written a single letter to anyone during this period without the shadow of the censor haunting my mind.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

21. To Indira Gandhi¹

Sevagram
9/6/42

Darling Indu,

I was happy to receive your little note from Srinagar and to know that you liked the house. Srinagar is not a bad place early in June.

Excursions to Kolahai sound very attractive but do not overdo this kind of thing. They are tiring and I am not sure that it is good for you to invite fatigue. If late you feel quite fit and rested then you may take an excursion in easy stages. The Kolahai trip is not a long one and except the last stage is not tiring. But the last stage overworks and boulders right up to the glacier is definitely exhausting.

I imagine an interesting trip from Pahalgam would be to the Lake (I forget the name—is it Shertinag?²) two stages on the way to Amarnath. This lake, I am told, is very lovely.

But do rest a lot.

I have been here two days and Maulana is due here tonight. Probably we shall stay here another 4 days and then I propose to go to Bombay for 3 days. I expect to be back in Allahabad on the 16th or 17th.

Things are warming up, especially in our province. So anything might happen in the future. It really does not much matter what happens. You must not cut short your stay in Kashmir because of happenings here.

Love to you and Feroze,

Your loving,
Papu

Have you got the 2 numbers of *Reader's Digest* which I took to Kulu? If so I would like you to send them by post to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Tallital, Naini Tal, U.P.

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. The reference is to Sheshnag Lake.

22. To Indira Gandhi¹Wardha
13-6-42

Darling Indu,

I am still here. Two of your letters have reached me here from Srinagar and they have made me a little hungry for the sight of that Valley and the mountains that surround it. But I take vicarious delight in your being there and thinking of you, think also of Kashmir. Vividly the scenes stand up before my eyes.

Here it has been very hot but the wind has now changed and the monsoon rains are near. In Bombay they have already started and they should reach Wardha soon. I do not yet know how long I shall stay here—possibly another two or three days. It is slow work with the Maulana and Bapu for they have special times which do not easily fit in and the heat prevents a journey to Sevagram in the middle of the day.

I am a little anxious about your excursions. You will be forgetful and tire yourself out and that will be no good. There is a reference in your letter to Sonamarg. Of course you must go there. It is a dream of a place. But I wondered if you intended going there from Liddarwat direct. That is a perilous journey though a short one. I have an idea that this passage over the mountains is called by an expressive name in Kashmir meaning 'Ladder to Hell' or Heaven.

If you go with Sheikh Sahab anywhere, one thing is certain. You will be over-fed.

The War goes on and India is in ferment and all manner of odd things happen, but the mountains and valleys remain. So you might as well take your fill of these mountains and valleys while you may.

Puphi (Nan) has been rather ill in Bombay. She has hurried back to Khali.

Love,

Papu

1. Indira Gandhi Papers, N.M.M.L.

23. Telegram to Indira Gandhi¹

Wardha
11 July 1942

Your letter from Mohanmarg. Don't hurry back. Live in beauty while you may please. Try visit Frontier Province on return meeting Mamu and Doctor Khan Sahib.

Love,

Papu

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

24. To Duncan Greenlees¹

Allahabad
July 27, 1942

My dear Greenlees,

I have your letter.² I am very sorry to learn of your difficulties and sorrier still that a man of your capacity should not be in a position to do good work. I would like very much to help you and to try to fit you in a suitable place. For the present I do not quite know what I can do. I shall enquire from some friends and write to you again.

There is one great difficulty, however, you know that we are on the verge of upsets and big happenings. It is difficult just at this time to make any suitable arrangement. Even if any arrangement is made, it has to be temporary.

Have you any journalistic experience, that is, have you done any work on the staff of a newspaper? If so, what work have you done? Journalism is of course something much more than occasional writing of essays.

What are your special subjects? I want to know this from the point of view of teaching work in the Vidyapith or elsewhere.

Also please let me know what your minimum expectations would be, to begin with, at any rate? I want this for my personal information only.

I am going away to Bombay on the 2nd August and my address there will be: Sakina Mansion, Carmichael Road, Bombay.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

3. He stated that Sri Bala Gurukul School, Madras, which he founded had been closed down because of the War and that he would like to take up some job as a journalist. He wanted financial help from Indian friends as he did not want to quit India and go back to England.

1. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad

16-2-29

Dear Bebee,

Forgive me for not thanking you for the two books you sent me. I enjoyed them, specially *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*.² I have managed to get another volume by Thornton Wilder³ called *The Angel That Troubled the Waters*.⁴ If you have not read it I shall send it to you. It contains some of his earlier efforts—short two page dialogues which are sometimes rather immature and sometimes beautiful.

I have been to Delhi and Lahore and today I am going to Delhi again. In Lahore Papi and I failed to meet in spite of our best efforts. When I went to see her she was out, and when she came to my place I was out. I had a distant glimpse of her at a meeting I addressed and which she honoured by her distinguished presence.

I have never met Iqbal. He has always been one of the many problems I could not solve. How can a real poet be so extraordinarily communal and narrow-minded and earthly? And yet he happens to be both. Very probably this contradiction is largely due to his clothes which you loathe. I am entirely with you about the proposed legislation to regulate the sartorial and other appearance of a poet. It will be difficult to get it through for I have come to the conclusion that people object to changing their clothes and tufts and beards and other such like excrescences and markings far more than they object to a change in political or economic conditions. They say that politics have passed away and have given place to economics. We have the economic interpretation of history, and the importance of psychology and psychoanalysis in education and the formation of a people's character. Why not a sartorial interpretation of history? There is no doubt that clothes have a powerful influence on the mind. How great must have been their influence in history. So I am all for drastic legislation on the subject. Poets must look and act as poets. I am sure this would do Iqbal a lot of good. We might even wean him from the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Published in 1927; won the Pulitzer Prize for 1928.

3. (1897–1975); author and dramatist; his works include *The Cabala* (1926); *The Woman of Andros* (1930); *The Merchant of Yonkers* (1939); *The Ides of March* (1948); *The Matchmaker* (1954).

4. A volume culled from Thornton's earliest works; a series of tiny plays, published in 1928.

baneful influence of dogmatic religion which must do infinite harm to his poetry.

The family is flourishing. Indeed I am a little surprised at its good health. Both Kamala and Betty have not misbehaved since we came from Calcutta. I hope the bit of the family in Hyderabad is doing equally well.

Love.

Yours,
Jawahar

2. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
10-7-29

My dear Bebee,

Thank you for your telegram. So at last the great ambassador is returning after her triumphal tour!² I am very glad she is coming back and you must be vastly excited. Perhaps you know that the All India Congress Committee is meeting in Allahabad on the 26th July. It is an important meeting and we would very much like to have your mother here. But it is a little hard to make her rush up north just when she is looking forward to some rest at home with you. Perhaps you are going to Bombay and if so perhaps both of you could come here together if the journey is not too much. It would be delightful if you could manage it. There will be a crowd here but we could squeeze your little self in somewhere. The crowd will go away after a day or two but you two could stay on in a little more comfort. Gandhiji will be coming.

For many months I have been thinking of writing to you. I have carried your last letter to me in my journeyings, a reminder of you and of the answer I had to send. I have toyed with the idea of this answer. It was pleasant to think of you and I did not wish to hurry—all this by way of excuse!

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Sarojini Naidu went on a six-month tour to the United States, England, Italy, France, Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. She returned to India on 22 July 1929. She had undertaken the tour at the invitation of some Universities and other public bodies in America, and also to counter the impression, about India, created by Miss Mayo's book *Mother India*.

I hope you are well and have not had any further trouble with your frail body. The gods have given me such an aggressively and even coarsely healthy body that it is not easy for me to realize physical suffering in others. And yet I have seen enough of it in others.

Betty is quite well now after her operation. Kamala has her ups and downs. She went to Calcutta bent on having herself cut open. She swore she would not come back without being operated upon. But the doctors just to spite her, I suppose, refused to operate. I am sure now that she was right and they were wrong. Soon after returning to Allahabad she had a violent attack of pain again and when I wrote to the wise ones in Calcutta they said that perhaps it would be better to operate for appendicitis. If they had been a little wiser to begin with all of us would have been saved a lot of trouble. So perhaps we may make a pilgrimage to Russa Road again. But not this month. Bidhan is likely to come here for the A.I.C.C. meeting. We shall settle then.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

3. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
23.7.29

My dear Bebee,

It is so sad, your not coming. But of course you cannot have Harin² and Papi, specially the latter. She requires so much looking after. In spite of Oxford I am afraid she still lives in the mid-Victorian age. I suppose she will resent this statement but as she grows younger with the passing of years she will realise the truth of it. What does she mean by slandering me by calling me 'very old'? I hurl the allegation back but I shall not say that I scorn the allegger. I have no intention of getting even moderately old. I hope to carry on with some vigour, till, like the one horse shay, I fall to pieces. But sometimes, I must confess, the long shadow of this old old country falls on me, and it

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya, (b. 1898); poet, artist, singer and film actor; his works include *Virgins and Vineyards: Life and Myself*, *The Feast of Youth*, *Masks and Farewells* and *Bubbles and Eggs*.

chills. And then I feel like a wanderer in strange places, old and tired and unable to find my way out to the sunlight.

And so the 'motherling' has returned in a blaze of glory. We are all excitement to meet her and be cheered by the blast of fresh air she will bring with her. I wonder if she has gone to you. I do hope she is coming here.

The A.I.C.C. meeting is going to be exciting enough. The Bengal contingent is coming in full strength—solid as a block. Our U.P. friends think and act differently. We are too superior to believe in discipline and each one of us has his own patent remedy for Swaraj.

Give my love to Papi and tell her not to be angry with me—and keep a lot for yourself.

Yours,
Jawahar

4. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Mussoorie
Oct. 24th, 1929

Dear little Bebee,

A message from you is always welcome—congratulations doubly so. I would gladly fulfill your prophecy, but destiny is a hard and dangerous thing and a difficult companion. Are you not previous with your congratulations? I pleaded with Gandhiji not to thrust me into the Congress Presidentship. I told him that this was the surest way of crushing me and suppressing all the joy of a free lance that gave me some effectiveness in my work. But he is terribly obstinate. To the last I was almost sure that he would change his mind. But he did not and I cannot remember having passed a worse half hour than the one which preceded my election.

I have not been happy about it, nor are you in spite of your momentary enthusiasm. I have tried to think of other things and to forget the election. I have largely succeeded, and when I have thought of it at all, it has been impersonally, as something apart from me.

I feel more at peace now. A week at Mussoorie has done me good and the mountains and snowy peaks have cooled the fever of my brain. What the future will bring I do not know. I hardly care. But the

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

thought of those "thousands of young men" who expect great things of me is overwhelming. And I on the threshold of forty! It is really too dreadful to contemplate.

But enough of me. I am tough in body and mind, too much of the earth to suffer much or mind what happens. Last year's beating that I got from the police convinced me of this. I am worried about you. You must not be ill. Do not bother to come to Lahore. It will not be worth it. But get well and with your radiant smile give us the courage that we lack. Come to Allahabad and I promise that you will have rest and will get back your strength. Your mother told us when she came to Allahabad in August or thereabouts that she would bring you in September. But you did not come and it was a sore disappointment. You were not well then. But you will get better soon and as soon as you are well enough come over. It will be a sad Congress if you are far away in Hyderabad.

I have a grievance against your mother. At her instance—indeed I would not have done it otherwise—I lent the *Bridge of San Luis Rey*, which you sent me, to Amaranatha Jha. As I did not get it back for a long time I wrote to him. And now he tells me that he returned it long ago. Where it is I do not know. I shall look for it again but I am greatly distressed about it.

The Mahatma is here, amazingly full of life and energy. He takes tremendous walks and leaves most of his companions panting behind. We go down tomorrow—he to continue his tour and I to Allahabad.

Write to me. It is a delight to hear from you.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

5. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Moving Train
23.3.1930

Dear Bebee,

I have just realised for the nth time how utterly unfit I am to undertake any job. I was supposed to give you your address-book and an ear pendant or some such thing which you had left in Allahabad. I had

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

put them for safety's sake in my pocket-book. And there they are still perfectly safe! Well, if I do not forget again I shall send them from Allahabad to Bombay.

The little man was going strong yesterday. Trudging away, staff in hand, like Peter the Hermit, to the promised land where salt can be had for the picking up. I suppose I have seen the last of him for many a day and it is as well that the last picture of him that I carry should be this. Ever on the march with brief rest, in search for something which eludes our grasp. It is symbolical enough of him and of all of us.

And when shall I see you again, little woman? For though I do not understand women, in the abstract or the concrete, having had little training therefor, I like and am attached to some of the fine examples of this species I have had the good fortune to come across. And it was a delight to have you in Allahabad during two brief months, although, alas, I was often away. The world is wide and the future may have big things in store for all of us, but I shall remember your pleasant companionship and take heart from your splendid courage. And when trouble looms ahead and one's patience is sorely tried, that memory will remain to soothe and cheer and hearten and put even the redoubtable plum pudding in the shade!

Keep well and smiling—Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

6. To Kamala Nehru¹

Central Prison
Naini
July 8th, 1930

Kamala dear,

I am writing to you after many months. My letters to father and one to Nan from jail were really meant for everyone at home. So long as father was out of jail I wrote to him but now that he has joined me I shall write to you or perhaps occasionally to someone else.

Nan's letter to father came this morning. It is short and there is not much in the way of news in it. She excuses herself by saying that most of what she might write would not be allowed to reach us. And

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L.

so she gives us little or no information of Ranjit and our many friends, and of happenings in Allahabad and elsewhere. I wish she and Betty and you would not constitute yourselves the censors of what should enter jail and what should not. That is the job of the jail officers. Let them do it. You can write just what you think would interest us, and there are so many things that are happening that would interest us. We are now getting the *Pioneer* daily in addition to the weekly *Bharat*, so that some important news manages to reach us through them. But I often wonder if in all the wide world there is a more inane and ill-run daily than the *Pioneer* or a more futile weekly than the *Bharat*. The *Pioneer*, since Wilson left it, has become as dull and inefficient...² Nothing but the absence of news in jail induces me to read the wretched rag!

I hope mother has recovered from the chill she got in the women's procession, which by the way, might have been described more fully than Nan has done in her letter. It was a brave but risky thing for her and for you to march in the rain for hours. I feel proud of all of you doing so much but remember that your work and your efficiency depends on your health. You must keep fit.

Father has been poorly since last night. This afternoon he had some slight shivering and a rise of temperature to 100°F. Probably it is just a touch of malaria which will pass off soon. But he is very poorly in health all round and requires the most careful watching and nursing. Blood pressure—asthma—eczema—eye trouble—malaria—&c. &c. at this age are not pleasant companions and the cells of Naini jail do not add to his comfort or health. All of us—Mahmud, Narmada Prasad and I—try to serve him to the best of our ability so as to lessen his discomforts but after all we can do little. We are terribly crowded. We might have changed to another barrack with more cell room but on the whole I preferred our present habitation in spite of its over-crowding. Some arrangements are being made to lessen this over-crowding by giving us a specially made bathroom and lavatory. This will relieve the congestion slightly but it will have its own disadvantages as it would mean father having to walk in the open some little distance before he can go to either of these two places. Meanwhile father is sharing my old cell and bathroom. Our bathroom, you will be amused to learn, is used for all manner of purposes. It is the lavatory, bathroom, luggageroom and pantry. All our fruit and food material is kept there. And it is about 10 or 11 ft square! Imagine father living in these conditions! I am very glad however that he is here so that we can be of some

2. Censored by the jail authorities.

service to him. By himself or with strangers he would have been terribly uncomfortable.

Ever since father and Mahmud have come here³ my reading and spinning have almost stopped. My Muller's exercises and standing on the head have also gone—there is no room for anything—and most of my day is taken up in cleaning and scrubbing the cells and our cutlery and crockery and in generally looking after father's things. The first four days were naturally rather novel and it has taken a little time to settle down. Gradually I hope I shall find time for reading and spinning. But in no case am I likely to spin or read as much as I did previously. You need not trouble to send me any more *punis*—I think I have enough to last me for this present term of imprisonment. Next time, when I have to come back we shall make further arrangements!

I have been very pleased at my reduction in weight. I have gone down 12 lbs since I came here and I feel much fitter. I am afraid however that now with less exercise and all the abundant food that you are sending, I shall grow fat again. This is a terrible thought! The one saving thing is that I am keeping up my running.

Please send us a clinical thermometer—also an ordinary salt cellar—not the crystal ones in the dining room. Some quinine has been sent to us today but this is sugar-coated and father does not like this. Please therefore send Quinine Bihydrochlor plain—uncoated. Please also send Mahmud's fountain pen which he left in the office in Swaraj Bhawan.

Mahmud has had no news of his wife. I am surprised to learn that you did not telegraph to her of his arrest. He half expected an interview with her last Sunday but no one came. She can now come any day that suits her. You had better see her when she comes to Allahabad and explain to her. You might even accompany her to the prison and stay outside while she interviews Mahmud. Tell her that *purdah* arrangements will be made. Also that three persons can interview at one time, besides minor children. When she comes some previous notice had better be sent to Mahmud by telephone or otherwise.

July 9th

I could not finish this letter last evening and am continuing it today. Father is better this morning. He has no fever and by tomorrow ought to be in normal condition.

We are returning the joist fan today. Its recurrent noise and oily smell does not suit father. Fortunately it has been fairly cool lately. In the day-time we have a man to pull the punkha.

3. They were brought to Naini jail on 30 June 1930.

Father would like to refer to the last bill of his fees and costs in the Darbhanga Case, a cheque for which I believe he gave you. Get this from Upadhyaya or wherever it is and send it here or bring it with you at the time of your interview. Also bring father's Imperial Bank Cheque-book and pass-book. The latter should be written up to date by the bank.

Please remember to pay the current municipal and Electric Supply Co's bills. The Swaraj Bhawan electric & municipal bills should be made over to Raja Rao for payment.

I find from Nan's letter that Indu does not like the idea of learning Sanskrit as it is a 'dead language'. She wants to learn Urdu. Certainly she should learn Urdu. We ought all to know it. But I should very much like her to learn Sanskrit in spite of its being 'dead'. In order to know living languages well one must know some of the dead languages, for all living languages have their roots in dead languages; otherwise our knowledge will be superficial only and there is danger of our becoming superficial also. Of the dead languages obviously Sanskrit is the most suited for us. All our past history, literature, life and thought are embedded in it and no one can really understand Indian culture or what India was without knowing Sanskrit. Besides, it is a beautiful language, stately and melodious, with a magnificent literature. It is a matter for great regret for me that I do not know much of it. I am sure Indu when she grows up will regret not knowing it. Therefore it is advisable for her to begin as early as possible. The later one begins the more difficult it is. But of course I do not want Indu to learn anything against her will. Let her read this and decide for herself. If she decided in favour of Sanskrit try to get some one other than an old style Pandit to teach her. Perhaps the Hindi teacher can take up Sanskrit also.

I understand that Tara Chand is supplying some one to teach Indu the general subjects. This is for the time being satisfactory but it cannot do as a permanent arrangement. I think you should try to get a really competent woman who can help in starting a school. As I wrote to father some time ago it would be worth while to get some one from the United States or Switzerland. Write to Dhan Gopal to find out. Such a woman should teach Indu and perhaps one or two others for two or three months while arrangements are made to open a school. But this will take time. Meanwhile you might be able to get a trained woman teacher from the Bombay side. Why not write to Miss Powaiya or some other Bombay friends. I understand that Powaiya has a younger sister who is competent. If you can get a really good woman ask her to come for three months on probation (first of all of

course she must be interviewed by you or by some friend in Bombay). During these three months she can stay with you and teach Indu various subjects probably including Sanskrit. You****

4. Letter incomplete.

7. 'To Kamala Nehru'

Central Prison
Naini
23.7.30

Kamala,

I am writing under considerable difficulties, but today is the appointed day and I must not miss it. Your letter and Betty's to father came this morning. Last week I had your letter with Indu's note. I am sitting at present in a *choldari* with the blazing sun outside and as I melt away and gradually dissolve I wonder if Naini jail is not trying to create a record in heat! And I am reminded of a story of a resident of Arizona in the United States who for his sins was condemned to go to Hell. Having arrived there he started shivering and complained of the cold and wanted a rug! If Arizona was hotter than fires of hell our *choldari* in Naini prison cannot be a bad second to it!

Mahmud and I spend most of our day in this *choldari*, and often the night when it rains. Father rests in my old cell and I have deserted my bathroom-pantry for this *choldari*. The latter is hotter but at least it is more open. But I must not grumble or complain of the heat or other happenings. The heat after all is a small matter but it is far more difficult to suffer folly and there is always enough of this at hand. But I always live in hopes of improving my temper so that I might be able to put up with the folly of others, and jail, which contains a vast deal of this, will no doubt do me good.

Father has not been well for the last two days. He took his injection day before yesterday and since then he has been upset. This was not due so much to his injection as to other troubles—indigestion &c. He fasted for two days and was thoroughly uncomfortable night and day. What little we could do we did but a barrack in jail is not an ideal health resort or hotel *de-luxe*. The heat makes matters worse. We have a punkha coolie for father for part of the day—I wonder what has

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L.

happened to the Kyko fan which was coming from Calcutta or Bombay. I wish it was here. In the mornings and evenings and at night when there are no punkha arrangements here, it would be very useful. After two days' fast father felt a little better this morning and his temperature was normal or near it. At noon today he took a little dal and rice. I hope he will be well again soon. It is obvious however that he has no reserves of health and every little thing upsets him and makes him unwell.

He wants to have his homoeopathic box here—also his three small homoeopathic books—Boericke's *Materia Medica*. 2. Nash's *Regional Leaders* and 3. Clarke's *Prescriber*. You will find these books in his study—Hari knows them. Also he wants a clip for a rubber tube—Hari has got it.

Because of his ill health father could not take the mangoes or other eatables which you have been sending recently. Please do not send so many things. Do not send any vegetables at all. Send pan and fruit about twice a week and other things when asked for. For the present the following articles are required:

1. Torc.
 2. Ovaltine (tin you sent was bad and was returned—I hope you sent it back to the shop).
 3. Charcoal.
 4. *adrak*. अदरक.
 5. A Swadeshi comb for myself.
 6. A thermometer (clinical). Ask Rabin to get a good one which can be read easily and whose markings do not disappear. We have two thermometers but the lines in both have partially disappeared and it is difficult to read them.
 7. The *Pioneer* of the 10th and 11th July which contains the Viceroy's speech² or any other paper containing it.
 8. K.T. Shah's "Gandhi's Eleven Points" a small book which Prof. Shah presented to father in Bombay recently. It must be in his Bombay papers.
 9. Winston Churchill's *World Crisis*—2 or 3 volumes³—in the big North book case on the right.
 10. My khadi *puttees* for Mahmud.
2. This refers to the speech made by Lord Irwin on 9 July 1930 justifying the suppression of the civil disobedience movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi; and making an appeal for the Round Table Conference to decide upon the constitution for the "progressive attainment of Dominion Status."
 3. Published in six volumes between 1923 and 1931.

11. The *Living Age* for last three months or so.
12. A Hindi Primer for Mahmud.
13. Some Urdu book for me!

A goodly list! I shall probably add to it before I have done—Don't bother about anything you cannot easily get. You are so very busy that I hesitate to take any of your time. The *Pioneer*—stupid paper—says little enough about the boycott week activities but I have no doubt that your labours are bearing good fruit and I wish indeed that I could see the great display of national flags in the city.

Your birthday came as a surprise. The *Samvat* date always does so. I remembered well enough the first of August but no previous intimation was given of the 21st of July. However the *baz bhatta* and *khir* &c. arrived just in time and we had a mighty feed! Almost as a birthday present I find you have got the membership of the W.C. It is a high honour and a great responsibility and I feel sure you will shoulder the burden well. I find from the *Pioneer* that there is a meeting in Bombay on July 30th. I presume you will attend it. You ought to do so.

Today I returned some old *newar*. This has been taken off one of the beds you sent and replaced by new *newar*. The old stuff can be given to a servant who has need of it. It is in bad condition.

I was very sorry to read about Shaukat Ali's antics. Poor man—he has quite gone to pieces and deserves to be pitied. Unfortunately he does some harm still.

The great day for us in jail is coming soon—Interview day! Next Saturday I hope to see you all, and in my excitement I shall get up earlier and try to shave closer and put on my cleanest *kurta* and dhoti for the wonder of a visit from you all. And the minutes will go rapidly and the visit will be over too soon and I shall return to my barrack to look forward to next interview day. Where you will be then, or my other interviewers, I do not know and do not much care, for wherever you may be I am sure you will be working for the cause and carrying the good flag forward. I am afraid, and yet I glory to think of it, that our life is going to be a chequered one for many a year and the joy of good work done will have to take the place of many wants. Do not imagine that this is a short episode in our lives—a pleasant holiday ending with the long summer day. Many a summer and winter will come and go before peace will come to us. It is a long journey and as we proceed we shall have to discard much of the unnecessary baggage that clings to us. To travel fast one has to travel light.

Bets—the above is meant for you also. Sitting here, I dream of snowy Montana and the high peaks and the beautiful cold winds. I also think of the *chauffage centrale*⁴ which is supposed to be such an attraction in the houses and for which you pay heavily. I wish they would take some of the unnecessary *chauffage* from here!

Send my love to Bibi (Padmaja) and tell her that I am still waiting for A. E.'s⁵ *Candle of Vision*—How is she now? Now that womenfolk are going to prison she must get fit and strong and be ready for an (ar) rest cure. The pun is not mine. It is the great poet's—Tagore.

If you write to Helen tell her that I finished with Gibbon⁶ long ago and I am fully occupied with another empire now. We are all busy writing the history of this in a more effective way than with pen and ink. To act history is far more exciting than to write it or read it. Meanwhile like a good prisoner I spent much of my time in spinning and weaving. And latterly this has given place largely to sweeping, scrubbing and similar accomplishments.

Take care of yourself—little soldier boy—we have many a great fight ahead and no lack of high enterprise. India is today the land of adventure. Pity the dull and sober whose vision is as limited as their intellect and physical courage. But to the brave gallant adventure beckons and the flag calls.

Indu dear, congratulations to the little monkey on her success in enrolling fellow *Vanars* in the *Vanar Sena*. I am glad you have changed your emblem. I hope the *Vanars* will manage their own affairs and will not rely upon their elders too much.

Dadu suggested to you that you should run everyday. This is good. I wish you would do so in the morning. Also try to stand on your head. Nothing like it!

Kamala

Hope mother is well—Try to prevent her from tiring herself too much. Give my love to her and tell her to look after herself and not to worry about us.

4. Central heating.

5. George William Russell (1867–1935); Irish poet and dramatist.

6. Edward Gibbon (1737–1794); British historian, author of the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

Give my love to Uma Bhabi and Chand and Tara and Rita, also to your mother.

Love,

Your loving,
Jawahar

Mahmud sends his *salaams* and wishes you many happy returns of your birthday. He says he is very keen on seeing Indu's *Vanars*.

8. To Kamala Nehru¹

Central Prison
Naini
2nd Sept. 1930

Kamala dear,

The time is not very far off now when I complete my present term of imprisonment and am due to be discharged. I am by no means sure that I will be discharged even then, however, that is a matter about which one need not worry. But whenever I may be discharged I am beginning to feel very doubtful about the kind of home-coming I am likely to have. It seems highly likely that all of you will land yourselves in jail and leave a deserted house to welcome me. It will be a bit of a disappointment for me but I cannot say that I shall be unhappy about it. Babu indeed will be delighted. I can imagine him rejoicing at the arrests of Hansa Mehta and Mrs. Ambalal.²

My discharge however is yet nearly six weeks' hence. I wonder sometimes if you and Nan and Betty will remain out even till my next interview. Do not hurry off. Let us meet once again at least.

Strange, what changes a few months have brought in our old country, and the Working Committee of which you are now the oldest member—oldest not in age but in priority of appointment. You seem to be developing into a dangerous rival for me! I wish you would try to rival me in my health and physique also.

Father's health, or rather ill health is a matter for anxiety. Not that there is anything happening immediately which need cause anxiety. But his present troubles taken with his age are serious enough. He has

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. They were arrested on 30 August 1930.

not yet got rid of the streak of blood in his sputum. Sometimes it is absent, but as soon as we are beginning to congratulate ourselves, it reappears again. He is very far from looking or feeling bright. Indeed sometimes he feels quite tired out and hardly has any wish to move about or do anything. Rabin comes here twice a week to give an injection.

Sometimes, through roundabout ways—other peoples' interviews or letters—I learn that all kind of rumours are afloat in Allahabad as to what I am supposed to have said regarding work outside. The Superintendent told me the other day that I am supposed to have instigated picketing at the university. You know that my opinion is that a person in jail is unable to form a correct opinion of the position outside and hence cannot give any worthwhile direction. Of course if I learn anything my immediate reaction may be to criticise it. But that is sheer force of habit. You must realise and so must others that a prisoner's views are not worth having, and must shift for yourselves. I say this not because of any innate modesty on my part—as you know I am singularly lacking in it and am aggressive enough outside. But at present I am not on the active list and hence my desire not to be misunderstood—because of unauthorised rumours. So far as you and Nan and Betty and others who see me are concerned there is no chance of my being misunderstood. But I write this for others who do not interview me.

I hope you saw to it that Rs. 100 were sent on behalf of father to the Superintendent, Yervada Prison for Wheeler.

Tell Nan that I am very glad she is interesting herself in courses of first-aid and nursing &c. This is very good and Ranjit with his experience ought to help tremendously. It would be a good thing if Ranjit was put in charge of all the hospital arrangements. It is no good you or a few others trying to shoulder all the burden. Try to decentralise. If Ranjit is willing, discuss the matter with him and Uma Bhabi.

When I think of all the hard work and worry that all of you outside have to face I feel thoroughly ashamed. Prison life is indeed an indulgence nowadays. A little ashamed as I am, I am also very proud that all those who are dear to me are giving of their best in this great struggle. Nothing has pleased Bapu so much as the part the women of India are taking. He feels, and so do all of us, that the future of India is safe in their keeping.

Mother and Betty must be wandering about somewhere. Everybody seems to be developing into an orator! Even your mother, I am very glad to learn, is touring about and speaking at meetings. Send my love to her.

I hope Indu is carrying on her lessons regularly. She is, and I am glad of it, a high-spirited girl. I would rather have an ounce of spirit in her than a pound of tame learning. But learning and mind training is also necessary and so I do hope that she will pay attention to these. I am writing a few lines for her.

I am also writing a few lines for Padmaja. Send them to her. The books she has sent should also be returned to her as soon as you get them back from me. Do not return the books which she has presented to me. You will see inscriptions to this effect on the front page. If you write to Bul and Nargis send my love to them.

I am trying hard to stand on my head but I have not succeeded yet. Please send me the first two numbers of *Yoga Mimamsa* Magazine. I think these give the necessary information on the subject. You will find them in the library in the East book case, near big one.

Send us three small towels and three dusters.

Look after yourself well for you have to do a great deal of work yet. What can a person who is ill do? Feed up and rest enough and you are welcome to work as hard as you like. I am looking forward greatly to our interview next Saturday. If Uma Bhabi is free, bring her along.

Love to everybody.

Mahmud's *Salaams* to all.

Yours,
Jawahar

9. To Kamala Nehru¹

Naini
10.9.30

Dear Kamala,

Received your letter just now. Papa must have given you all the news about here. I have nothing particular to write about. Outside, you are all working very hard—I congratulate you—what scope is there for me to say anything? You must not worry about the fact that I do not get to know everything. I too have plenty of experience about activities and can understand a thing without being told about it. In big tasks each individual is tested, not only for how much he can do himself but also

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

for how much he can get out of others. One must remember this, and then, there are always ups and downs in any work.

So, you have concluded that I will not come out? What a conclusion you have arrived at! I do fully intend to come out.

Mahmud's interview is on next Sunday i.e. the 14th. He has no hopes of his wife or sisters coming this time. You could find out. If you like, you, Khawaja and some one else can come and meet Mahmud, but after waiting for the train from Chapra. His son is better but still very weak.

I had asked for some books in my previous letter. I got some of them. Send the remaining ones if you can find them, don't bother much about it. Bring Uma Bhabi at the interview.

Look after yourself,

Love,

Jawahar

Indu darling,²

I do not know if you are going with Dadu tomorrow or not. You will decide of course. You are grown up enough to make up your mind for yourself. Do not bother about my interview. If you would like to spend some time in Mussoorie, you should certainly go there. We can have our interview on your return. Do just what you think right.

Give the letter on the other side to Mummie and remember you have to look after her and after yourself.

Love, from Papu
10/9

2. This letter is written in English.

10. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Central Prison
Naini
October 22nd, 1930

Bebec dear, Will I be in Bombay in mid-November? I guess not. I have a previous engagement in Barrack No. 6 of the Naini Central

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

Prison and I fear this will keep me busy for some little time. But do not worry. Time passes quickly—too fast indeed as each November with its birthday anniversary painfully reminds me. Whenever I have come to jail I have formed resolutions to do a great number of things, but time has flown and much has remained undone and I have not grown as wise as I intended to. Last time I started off finely with hard reading and hard spinning and weaving and hard running. I even read through Spengler's² *Decline of the West*³ and that was a feat. Slowly however I slackened off and began to spend time in such useless ways as watching the clouds sail by and the deep blue sky—how blue it looks through a gap in the clouds during the rains—and the army of parrots who have made their home in the crevices of the big wall that surrounds us and frowns upon us. They drove their predecessors the *mainas*, ruthlessly away and usurped their homes. And I watched the long processions of the ants—we have a few million of them—and marvelled at their organisation and their industry. Above all I looked at the long shadows cast on our guardian wall in the evenings. It is a circular wall, quite near us and wherever we may sit or stand in the evenings, if there is a light near by, strange and fantastic shadows appear on it—sometimes clear cut, sometimes vague and enormous like the inhabitants of Brobdingnag. And I live for a while in shadowland with the shadows of the past and of the future as companions. And the shadows of the future are good and pleasant to look upon.

And so time passes and all too soon the big gates of the prison open out and we into the outer world—for how long? Do not worry. I am really nearer to my friends when I am in prison than when I am outside. Outside I am wrapped up in the activity of the moment, forgetful of many things in my desire to achieve; here I have no such occupation, and even when I spin, I dream and think of friends and of all the fine things we are going to do in this old sleepy country of ours which has at last woken up a little. I wonder at my good fortune. Do not waste sympathy on me but congratulate me.

You do not say how you are. Keep well for the great day which is coming.

As an under-trial I have a measure of freedom in writing letters. After a day or two when I revert to the status of a convict this freedom will be very limited. Even so, if occasionally you send a few lines for

2. Oswald Spengler (1880–1930); German writer on philosophy of history.

3. Published in two volumes between 1918–1922, translated into English from German in which Spengler predicted the eclipse of the western civilisation.

me to Kamala she may be able to send them on with her letter. They will be very welcome.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

11. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
10.4.31

Bebbee dear,

How are you and when will I have the chance of meeting you? I think of you so often but you are so far away. I have heard wonderful stories of all you have done. I have received your letters and have wanted to write to you. But somehow I have not done so. The strain of the last two months has been terrific and I am so involved in life's tangles that escape seems almost impossible. I feel in the grip of a relentless octopus and I am so weary. I have decided to take a month off. Perhaps I might go to Ceylon—the further away the better. There appears to be no peace in India. But nothing is certain and I am dragged hither and thither whether I will it or not. I shall go to Bombay on the 16th and intend spending five or six days there. If I can manage it I shall go to Ceylon from there. When I have a little more peace I shall write to you. Meanwhile look after yourself. Old India will carry on without us for a while.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

12. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Kashi
29.6.31

Bebbee,

This is hardly going to be a proper letter. But I do wish to send you

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

a few lines now to thank you for what you wrote to me. I am here in Banaras for a day, and in the stately mansion of Shiva Prasad Gupta everyone sleeps in the middle of the day. I am about the only person who is awake.

I am glad you liked the photograph I sent you. It was taken after we had been ten days in Nuwara Eliya—ten days largely in ship and without any immediate responsibility or worry. That makes a difference. No large-bodied and fearsome females are likely to help, but perhaps a charming person might make this difference for a while. After all that is not my usual self. It might be my better self but we have become strangers to each other and sometimes we look into each other's eyes without the light of recognition. It is a long time now since I wedded myself to a jealous phantom and I have been a bondsman ever since with the mark of the serf in my eyes and on my brow. And I doubt if there is a divorce potent enough to separate us, for we have grown together and become almost one. Many an old friend and acquaintances has dropped off and the old ways have ceased to attract and like a slave I am driven hither and thither. Sometimes, a little wistfully, I think of other things, of the might have beens and the might bes, but immediately I am caught in the turn of the wheel and the big machine carries me on to I know not where.

I had indeed a strange home-coming. That night I was troubled, not because I had seen blood, for I am used enough to it. But it struck me that the fates were pursuing me with blood. In Colombo, just before I left, I had a bloody experience. In Bombay, a young boy was stabbed to death almost immediately after I had finished speaking at a public meeting, and lastly at Allahabad station. The boy who was stabbed here had such a sweet and charming face. He was about 14 and had come some distance to see me. He had a deep gash in the ribs and was covered with blood and yet he smiled and seemed to be glad that he had thus got a chance of seeing more of me. He has recovered now, but at the time the sight affected me and I wondered if I was going to be the cause of blood and suffering to others.

I feel a little better now. The last few days I have been wandering about the villages of some of our districts. Everywhere there were large crowds of kisans full of tales of woe. Both the government and the zamindars are out to crush them and to break their fine spirit. The agrarian situation here is as near a crisis as it can well be and there seems no real way out except our upsetting of the existing order. Crowds of kisans come to Anand Bhawan and I can offer them little consolation or help. And yet we are supposed to be at peace with government!

I must get you to teach me how to move serenely and unafraid through the misery and sorrow of this world. One forgets one's personal sorrow in the larger one, but there is no escaping this and it leaves its imprint on the face and the mind.

I am going to Bombay for the meeting of the Working Committee on the 7th.

I sent you two copies of my photograph. One was for Papi. I hope you gave it to her with my love.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

13. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
18.8.1931

You have not written to me for a long time, Bebee dear, and I have rather missed your beautiful but illegible handwriting. Some news of you I had in Bombay and I even heard that there was some chance of your coming there. But there was no such luck.

A little while ago I sent you copies of some letters I wrote to Indu from jail. Did you receive them? They are incomplete and much too personal for publication.

We are again polishing up our buttons and tightening up our belts, or whatever the equivalent of these operations may be in khadi. And a measure of excitement is again coming into our dull and prosaic lives. What a blessing is the British Government? What would we do without it?

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

14. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Allahabad
24.10.31

Bebbee dear,

I have not written to you for a long time and you have not remembered me for many months. Of course the fault is mine and I plead guilty and prostrate myself and approach you, after the manner of mahatmas, on bended knees. But I have been suddenly stimulated into writing to you, even at the cost of stealing some of my office time, by the rare news that you have sent Betty. So you are free from pain and having a real good time. How splendid. Keep good and do not sin again.

I wonder when I shall see you again. I wish I could have a glimpse of you before I return to my barrack in Naini jail. If you could only come here for a while—but I dare not suggest it lest the charm of your newly gained health should break.

This period of 'truce' has been one of the most painful episodes in my life, and one of the most trying so far as physical work is concerned. Fortunately the end is near. Or is it the beginning?

Do write.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

15. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Central Prison
Naini
27th Dec. 1931

Bebbee dear,

I am back again to my old haunts and everywhere there are old friends to welcome me. Just eleven months I was away, to a day, and it seems but yesterday that I went. The outside world seems far away and what

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I have done there a dream that passes on waking. I seem to find my level here with extraordinary ease. The very walls are friendly. And last night as I looked up at the moon and the stars, I felt as if I was surrounded by a host of friends, looking down at me kindly but somewhat quizzically and perhaps with a touch of complaint in their eyes. Had I not forgotten them and ignored them for many months? But there was no malice in their looks and they know how to wait.

I shall not write to you now for many a long day. And so I take this opportunity of sending you a few lines as an under-trial. An under-trial has a certain measure of freedom in this respect.

Your letter came. I was sorry to find how you had worried over my crude attempts to look after you. You must know by this time that it is a habit of mine to interfere with others and to imagine that it is my job to look after them. I am quite sure that you are strong enough to cheat the gods even for what can they do, before your charming smile?

I am afraid the task you have suggested for me in prison is beyond me. Father seems to be too near me always for me to think of writing about him. It would be difficult for me to share with another the memories and intimacies which I treasure.

We shall meet again, when perhaps we are nearer to remoulding this little world of India according to our hearts' desire.

Love,

Jawahar

16. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Naini Prison
January 12, 1932

Dear Bebee,

What delightful books you have sent me! Last year—or rather the year before—when I was living in this delectable spot, I sent for Sven Hedin's *Trans-Himalaya*² and other books of travel. In particular, I had the pictures of the Alps and of Mont Blanc. It was the height of summer then, and the sight of glaciers and snow-covered peaks was wonderfully cooling. Gazing at them I grew serene and the fever in the brain

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Reference is to the book *Mount Everest*, published in 1922.

subsided and I seemed to be lost in mighty distances. So you have guessed aright in sending me Nicholas Roerich and Sven Hedin. Shall I return them to you when I have read them and when my other companions, who feel attracted to them have also journeyed across the Gobi and trekked over the Himalayan passes?

And thus cut off from our immediate surroundings, we seem to inherit the mountains and the deserts and the wide wide world comes to us for the asking, and we realise, in the words of a favourite author of yours, how wonderful is the texture of life and how strangely life's richest gift flowers from frustration and cruelty and separation.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

17. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Dehra Dun Jail
January 10, 1933

Bebec dear,

You seem to be bent on spoiling me completely. All the books that I have coveted, and those that I have wanted to read, and those that I might have desired if I knew about them—all these come to me in endless succession from Poona. My appetite for books is big enough, but the capacity to digest them is limited. Sometimes I read a good deal; at other times the mood changes and I read little.

Who is this Frieda Das² whose books you have sent me? I have an idea that she is a Polish-German-Jewish-Swiss-American woman whom we used to meet in Geneva. She came to visit us in Allahabad also once and I believe you were in Anand Bhawan then. The facts about her seem to fit in, and yet I can hardly believe that she could write so well and make such delightful drawings. My recollection of her is not a flattering one. I remember her as a gushing and overpowering woman whose visits rather frightened me. Only a few days before I received her book of animal stories, which you sent, I had ordered this from a

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Frieda Mathilde Hauswirth (Mrs. Sarangadhar Das); her works include *Leap-Home and Gentlebawn* (1932) and *Into the Sun* (1933).

bookseller. I had sent for it for Indu. Probably in course of time this copy also will arrive.

I am not anxious and I am not worrying about your health. I have given up the habit of worrying about anything. What is the good of being in gaol if one worries? That should be the occupation of those who are not so fortunate. But I do feel that you have no business to have all manner of pains and your job in life is to be "vividly radiantly well and happy" and not merely smile through every kind of pain and torture, as you have an extraordinary way of doing. I would put myself up as a worthy example to be followed but then I have no pains or other bodily ailments, and in spite of this my temper, I grieve to say is not of the sweetest at all times. None the less I keep fairly cheerful, not merely passively but actively and aggressively.

Day after tomorrow I am having an interview with Nan and Betty and Indu. This is my first interview after seven months and I am extraordinarily excited about it. During these long months I had turned my mind away from interviews. I had put them away from me and, having done so, I seldom thought about them. Sometimes I felt a dull want of something, an empty feeling hard to analyse. But an active wish to see people was kept down. The moment however I decided to take interviews, I seemed to have opened out a new chamber of my mind, which had been locked up for so long, and ever since I have been full of the idea and eagerly looking forward to them. The long peace of mind—or was it merely ennui?—has been broken. How superficial our efforts are to train and control our desires! And now I shall want to meet so many friends.

What do I do? All manner of things as the spirit moves me. I am not the slave of some particular work as I am outside. Here I am lord of my time and can work or rest as I choose with no prickings of conscience. Jail, like Bernard Shaw's hell, is in a way the idle man's paradise. There is no feeling of responsibility, no singing of hymns in the heavenly chorus at stated intervals. And yet I am not exactly lazy, for laziness is own brother to dullness and ennui, and in jail regular and slightly tiring work is the best antidote for this. And so I read and write and take exercise and wash clothes and occasionally try my hand at cooking—but nobody appreciates my cooking. And for long hours I am silent, and I watch various animals, big and small, that come within the orbit of my vision, and I play about with a kitten, and generally behave like a five year old. As the old year passed away we had a new excitement—a distant one but none the less pleasing. Fresh snow-covered Mussoorie and all the neighbouring hill sides and the sight

of it cheered me up vastly. The damp cold that followed in its train was not so pleasant but then one can't have everything.

I sent you a packet of books long ago to your old address on Sassoon Road. I hope you received it. They were all your books except one—a *Heavenly Discourse*.³ Later I returned to you Morgan's⁴ *Fountain*⁵ and a few days ago I sent a book by Max Nomad.⁶ I have returned a large number of your books to Anand Bhawan. Perhaps Nan might take them to Poona. It is no good wasting them in Allahabad. They are likely to get lost there. I have still a good dozen or more of your books.

Dehra Dun is not so far off after all from Poona and, who knows, perhaps we might meet before so very long. Indeed we will. But there must be no more accidents and you must get into the pink of condition before you can legitimately expect that privilege.

Give my love to your mother.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

3. Published in 1927, its author was Charles Erskine Wood (1852–1944); an American writer.
4. Charles Morgan (b. 1894); English novelist and dramatist; his works include *The Gunroom* (1919); *Portrait in a Mirror* (1929); *The Fountain* (1932); *The Judges' Story* (1947); and *The Burning Glass* (1954).
5. It received the Hawthornden Prize for 1933.
6. Expatriate Austrian political writer; his works include *Dreamers, Dynamiters and Demagogues*; *Revels and Renegades*; *Apostles of Revolution, Political Heretics*, and *A Skeptics' Political Dictionary and Handbook for the Disenchanted*; died 1973.

18. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Dehra Dun Jail
February 7, 1933

Bebie dear, Your letter has not brought good news about yourself. Yes the road winds uphill—most roads worth marching on go up and up and it is often weary work climbing them. But you have the knack of doing it, and to others you have been a wonderful example. So do

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

not mind what the doctors tell you—you have not paid much attention in the past to their dismal prophecies, and have usually confounded them.

I am glad the two or three books I sent you interested you. The books I usually get are varied enough but on the whole they are of the 'heavy' kind. I have to concentrate mightily to follow the argument in some of them and slowly I make progress at the rate of about ten pages an hour. I try to keep myself away from too much light reading at a stretch. I find that this tires one more in the real sense of the word, and there is a feeling of ennui at the end of it. Innumerable pictures pass through the mind leaving no permanent impression like the movies. Heavy intellectual effort on the other hand gives a healthy feeling of fatigue and then it is a delight to relax with a light book. So I have tried to control my reading in jail, otherwise I would have gone through any number of books. For many months I toiled at German, not with remarkable success I am afraid. Ultimately I got fed up with it and gave it up, but I may go back to it later. Learning languages is not my strong point.

The books you have sent me have all been of the delightful and light variety. They have lured me repeatedly from the path of duty and made demands on the time allotted to economics and the like. After a day or two's relapse I have pulled myself up. The result is that I have large numbers of books which await reading. I can't keep up with your gifts, especially when they are added to the books I get from other sources. Please therefore let me catch up before you send me any more books. I have enough to carry me for another three months or so.

The books you have sent me lately are all quite new and I don't suppose you read them before sending them. May I send them back to you after reading them? Shaw's little book and *Golden Home* and the Russian stories and the Spanish lot, etc. Your mother will surely like to read them. Afterwards you can keep the books with you till I come to visit you and take them away! I can't accumulate books here. They have to be sent to Anand Bhawan or to you. Drop me a post card to say what you would like me to do.

I have been getting some foreign periodicals—*Manchester Guardian Weekly*, *New Statesman*, the *New York Nation & New Republic*. I used to get some others also like *Punch* but I have dropped them now. I was wondering if your mother would care to see them second-hand—or Mahadeva. If so they could easily be sent on every week. I send them on to Ranjit and I could send a word to him to send them on to any address you may mention. Perhaps it would be better if you asked Nan to write to Ranjit about them direct. I find these foreign papers

extraordinarily interesting as the world at present is in a most fascinating state of disruption. They give me some idea of changing and chaotic conditions all over Europe and America and the Far-East and it would be a good thing if Mahadeva & Co. had a glimpse of these conditions also for they are not less important than Guruvayur!²

Ansari has sent me three semi-travel books about England-Scotland-Ireland. I have just read the last one. It is quite interesting and I am sending it on to you.

For nearly a month now I have been alone. My companions have been discharged on completion of their terms. Even the kitten—Moti was her name—has gone. A jail official who was transferred has taken her with him. I feel a trifle lonely at times but on the whole I do not mind. I keep busy with my self-imposed tasks. Today—Feb. 7th—I complete eight months in this jail. I came here on June 7th, and it is just a year since I left Naini. Morning and evening I walk up and down a stretch of ground here a little over a hundred yards in length. I made a rough calculation yesterday that I had covered this about 15,000 times during the last eight months. That is just about the distance from Dehra Dun to Poona!

Yesterday was the second anniversary of father's death and the seventeenth of my wedding. Strange that these two events should have occurred on the same date—Feb. 6th! I think of father often and the conviction grows upon me that he died at the right time as he should have done. And yet, although it is two years ago, I cannot quite get used to his absence, and sometimes, how I miss him.

Do you know of a curious coincidence? Father and Rabindranath Tagore were born on the same day, the same date and month and year—May 6th, 1861. I discovered this coincidence in jail when I noticed Tagore's date of birth in his commemoration volume. Few people I suppose know of this. I don't think Tagore knows.

Morning and evening, when I take my constitutional, I can just see in the far distance some of the houses of Mussoorie. And sometimes I think of a time when, long long ago, you and fluffy-haired Papi came down from Woodstock to visit us! Was it in 1918? I can hardly remember the year. It is all so vague and distant.

I have made friends with a pye-dog. For many months I had noticed her from a distance and not paid much attention to her. I thought she was looked after and fed by somebody. Then suddenly I realised how thin and unhappy she was, and the search for food was a daily problem for her and she seldom succeeded in solving it. All the spirit

2. The reference is to the famous temple there.

had gone out of her from continuous neglect and ill treatment. And her fear-haunted eyes were almost human in their sorrow and misery. She had seen better days—like many of us!—and there was still some grace and beauty about her. So I have taken this nameless one in hand and fed her and brushed her and bathed her, and already we are friends. What shall I call her? She is a perfect lady!

Have you read Fauconnier's³ *Malaisie or Soul of Malaya*?⁴ It is a delightful book which you and your mother will like. Ask Nan or Betty to send it to you from Allahabad. It ought to be in Anand Bhawan as I sent it from jail.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

3. Henri Fauconnier (1879–1955); French writer of travel books. In 1905 he went to Singapore as manager of rubber plantations, and served the French army during First World War.
4. Written in French entitled *Malaisie*; was translated into English in 1935 as *Soul of Malaya*.

19. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Dehra Dun Jail
May 16, 1933

Bebec dear,

I am very much surprised to learn that I have been recently, or am, unwell. I was not aware of it. Having enquired into the matter I can assure you that your information is very much exaggerated. The chief basis for it seems to be the powerful imaginations which you and Indu possess. I would not of course say that my health is perfect, for perfection is beyond mortal ken, but I can say that I am about as fit as I have been for the last half a dozen years, and that is saying a great deal. As for the little pain I sometimes have, it is not in the chest but in the side and it is an old friend. Ansari reminded me that he had examined me for it in Geneva seven years ago. There appears to be a slight adhesion to the pleura (whatever this may mean). There is nothing serious the matter as such adhesions are common enough and

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

in themselves do not mean much. My chest and lungs and heart are in very good condition. Ansari suggested that I might irritate and annoy the body cells into activity by repeated applications of iodine so that they might absorb or swallow up or do some such thing to the unfortunate adhesion. This was to be a lengthy process as the adhesion does not easily permit itself to be swallowed. So I started with the iodine and applied thick coats of it frequently. I am afraid my zeal outran my discretion and for some days I was a bit jumpy. But it was all in a good cause. I have found by experience the right quantity to be applied and I do so without much trouble now. I am going on shedding my skin in that particular area again and again and each shedding gives me great satisfaction as it seems to assure me that the swallowing-up process is going on inside me. But as a matter of fact whether the wretched adhesion goes or remains it is not likely to affect me or my health to any appreciable extent.

I have written so much about an unpleasant subject simply because you insist on getting excited about it. Please realise that I am physically, and I hope mentally, quite a healthy specimen of humanity and there is nothing morbid about my body or mind. That is, so far as I can judge for myself.

As for cheerfulness, surely you do not expect a vacuous grin on the face all the time? One has moods and sometimes a vague feeling of malaise. Life is a speckled business with its lights and shades, and not having the good fortune to have an abiding faith in unknown powers, or bearded Yahveh, or three-eyed Siva, whose picture I am supposed to resemble, I have to seek for equilibrium in the recesses of my own mind. Fortunately I have so far found enough to keep me going.

And, after all, you must remember that one does not lead a normal life in gaol. Many of the psychological vitamins are lacking in this *pardahnashin* and solitary existence. The last of my companions here left me over four months ago and I have been alone since then. Not quite alone or in solitary confinement for I have the jail officials to talk to occasionally and they are decent, but still almost wholly devoid of social intercourse. I am fairly used to this solitary existence and yet it can hardly be a natural state of affairs.

I often wonder which is worse; uncongenial company or no company at all. I have had to put up with both, and when under one infliction I have thought of the other with some degree of relief. It is really difficult to compare the two as much depends on the extent of distress caused by the former and the length of time of this latter.

My little puppy had a violent attack of distemper. She was in a bad way—could hardly breathe or feed or walk. Not having any faith in

vets I refused to give medicine and simply nursed her carefully. I am sure that she would have died but for the careful nursing she got. When she gave up feeding I fed her semi-forcibly with milk and a fountain pen filter. She recovered, but there is a new ailment now—the tongue sticks out a little almost continuously. The vet. says this kind of thing happens as a result of distemper and that there is no cure for it, which all seems to me very extraordinary.

Thank you for the two snaps you sent. I should imagine that the original of your picture by the Hungarian artist is rather good. As for Siva you have exhausted all the adjectives, so what can I say? I am not personally fond of these mystic conceptions as they befog the mind, but I shall take your word for it that it is very beautiful, and feel secretly elated that this beautiful and terrible, and sweet and strong, and dynamic and weary-looking and radiant creature on canvas reminded you of me.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

20. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Poona
14.9.33

Bebbee dear,

I had your telegram many days ago and the thought of writing to you has hovered in my mind ever since I came out of prison. But it didn't take shape. I feel rather exhausted after five days of continuous talks and discussions but I want to send you my love before I leave Poona. Poona is as near as I am likely to get to the Golden Threshold for many a long year.

I am told that you are performing all manner of gallant deeds to help and succour the plague-stricken people of Hyderabad. All luck to you. My gallantry, I am afraid, is of a safer and a more passive variety.

Your mother has managed to touch a sleeping chord somewhere within by telling me that I might be able to see Uday Shankar dancing in Bombay tomorrow. I am quite excited about it.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

I am summoned now for more discussions and must go.
Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

21. To Kamala Nehru¹

Almora Jail
26 May 1935

Dear Kamman,

Day before yesterday, I received Indu's telegram sent from Bombay. Today I received your letter and hers. I am writing to you today itself and will send this by air mail. This may also reach Europe by the time you do, but I cannot say when you will get this, because this letter will go to Geneva and you will perhaps go to Vienna first. Madan had told me at Bhowali to send letters c/o American Express, Geneva. He did not write anything about this from Bombay, but Indu has sent the address of Thomas Cook, Geneva, and so I am sending this to Thomas Cook only and shall do so in future also. But I am having some misgivings. If Madan does not pay proper attention to this, there will be a lot of confusion about the letters. To many—like Kakkar and others, and Betty in Bhowali and probably to Amma—he has given the American Express address. This is a slackness of arrangements. It would be better if he gave the new address to everyone, and collected letters from Thomas Cook, wherever he might be. Let him make enquiries at the American Express also.

I had made many arrangements at Bhowali regarding your departure and Jal and Piloo helped a lot at Bombay. If these had not been done, there would have been a lot of trouble, and perhaps it would have been difficult for you to go at this time. You will not be getting this help in future and it is likely you may be a little inconvenienced. I am satisfied that Madan has gone with you, but Madan has not much experience in making domestic arrangements as he has mostly lived alone, and all his household affairs are looked after, as you know, by Suraj Bali. In these circumstances, he will often forget things—take more things

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

than necessary, and be troubled because of that—expenses will also be more—anyway, that does not matter—that is how experience is gained. If Nanu were with you in Vienna, you would have not only got help, but you could have brought down expenses, etc., with his advice. Therefore, I was particularly keen that you should call for Nanu. Madan is absolutely unfamiliar with these countries. *Chacha* (Jagat Narayanji) is going with you—he is a very good man and will surely try to help you. But what can the poor fellow know about the conditions in Europe?

Because of these reasons, I thought the sooner you reached Switzerland, the better. There will be a lot of trouble in wandering here and there and if you get stuck up in some other country, then you will have to undergo still more trouble. Obviously, I cannot advise you from here—this can be settled only on the advice of the doctors there. But I do wish that, if possible, you should go to Switzerland, after consultations in Vienna.

You have gone to Europe for your treatment. If you were not unwell, then obviously you would not have gone now. But I have liked your going for other reasons also. I am also a doctor of sorts of men and probably know a few essential things better than ordinary doctors. Very rarely does the cause of sickness lie merely in the body; the mind and thoughts have very much to do with it. The doctors here realise this very little—they get involved in outward symptoms alone. The treatment of the mind and thoughts depends on faith, not on medicine. Therefore I often become helpless.

In Europe you will be free from the troubles and anxieties you have here—it is also good that you will be away from me. If I were with you, I could definitely help you in lots of ways—at least, all the arrangements would have been made properly. Arrangements would have been made in other places also like the excellent arrangements made by friends in Bombay—but all this would have done no good ultimately. It is not good to be dependent on others and it becomes a habit, and when one does not get help, he complains. Man's self-development is made possible only by his own efforts. Too much care of a sick person also retards his progress.

Therefore, I wish when your health improves, you would take over all the arrangements in your own hands. Do not worry that you might make mistakes. If you make mistakes, you will learn from them. It is not proper that the entire burden should be put on Madan or on someone else. Madan will have other work also to do. We cannot tie him down for a very long time. But apart from this, I want you to develop attitudes and habits of independence. You will see how

much your strength and confidence increase by this. And so it is good that I am not with you and cannot impose my ideas on you. You have been familiar with my life for many years—at what plane of thoughts I live mostly—what I do—what are my defects and weaknesses—what few virtues I have. Then why depend on me? It is also not certain when I shall stay with you and when not. My thoughts and emotions may lead me anywhere. I am a traveller, limping along in the dark night. Why should I drag others into this darkness, however near or beloved they may be; why should they suffer the travails of the journey? I have no right to do so. But because I am a man of strong will, I do influence those near me—sometimes this is good and sometimes not. After great thought, I have evolved a philosophy of my life—I try to act up to it. This has relevance not just to politics but to every aspect of life. But this does not mean that others should also travel along the same path, whether they accept this philosophy or not. Every individual has to find his own way and walk along it. If two persons get together, then it becomes a very happy journey for them. But getting together depends on the mind and thoughts.

Therefore, I wish that you and Indu consider yourselves absolutely independent and do whatever you think proper. Let Indu manage all her affairs herself and you also do the same when you are a little better. I am hopeful that you will soon improve and regain health in Europe. It will certainly take some time to be completely cured—there is no need to worry about this.

Why worry for my sake? My body and mind both are robust; then what else can worry a man? And you know that I always take enough care of myself because I think it necessary for my work. So you rest assured from my side.

Madan wrote to me from Bombay that he has taken travellers' cheques for £125, cash £25 and a cheque for £180. I had made arrangements for a higher amount of cheque—I do not know why he has taken less. It would be better if he opened an account with Thomas Cook, Geneva. We have already had dealings with them and it will also be easy to send money from India.

You have written that there is very little money left in your account—so I got sent Rs. 100/-. I do not understand which account you had referred to.

I came to know about the hospital. You have made right arrangements—they will continue.

Betty and Raja came to meet me this morning. They might come and see me again after two weeks before returning to Bombay. Didda is not keeping well these days.

I came to know from Indu's letter that Feroze travelled with you from Allahabad to Bombay. I hope you must have talked to Bapu or someone else regarding him and his problems must have been resolved.

Till now I have been living in a small tent. It is quite hot during the day-time but evenings and nights are very pleasant. I had not been able to see moonlit nights properly for a long time. Nowadays, I see them and see the stars also a lot. It has not rained here for a long time.

You will certainly read the letter I wrote to Indu—there is no need to repeat its contents here.

It is midnight—the stars are shining brightly—there is absolute silence. Your ship, too, silently cutting across the sea must now be proceeding towards Aden.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

22. To Kamala Nehru¹

Almora Jail
7 June 1935

Dear Kamman,

The telegram intimating your arrival at Vienna reached me day before yesterday. I was rather surprised to know about your reaching there so soon. I was under the impression that it would take a day or two more. Perhaps ships travel faster now—three weeks back I took leave of you at Bhowali—in these three weeks how far you have reached!—whereas I stay firmly rooted to my ground like a tree.

Telegrams about your journey were very brief—they did not convey much news—perhaps in three or four days I may get letters posted by you and Indu at Aden and may come to know all the details. I had been hoping that you would have started moving about a little on board

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

the ship. After your consultations with the doctors at Vienna, I must get a telegram so that I may know what they have advised. It is my wish that they also advise against an immediate operation and ask you to take rest at Switzerland.

I do not know whether before your departure you made any arrangements to get newspapers from here. There must be some means or the other of getting news from India. The trouble is that newspapers here are quite useless and there are no suitable weeklies. If you like, you can send for *The Bombay Chronicle*—Upadhyaya will make arrangements for that. For the present, I am sending word to Upadhyaya to send *The Modern Review*, *Vishal Bharat* and *The Hindu Illustrated Weekly* of Madras to you—these will come to you care of Thomas Cook, Geneva. You will not get much news in them, none the less some connection with India will be maintained.

You must have heard that there was a terrible earthquake a week ago in Quetta and Baluchistan—it was more violent and destructive than the last year's earthquake in Bihar and, because it came at night, the loss was much more. It is said that more than 50,000 people got buried and killed—the number goes on increasing daily and it is possible that it may reach 70,000. Quetta town has been completely ruined and devastated, so also many small towns and villages.

The heart trembles after a terrible occurrence like this and petty troubles and sorrows of the world seem insignificant. For some days, the heat has been beyond limits in the whole country—much more than normal—Allahabad, Lucknow, etc. are burning with heat—so much so that even here in Almora, it is unbearable. Many people in the cities and villages on the plains have died because of this heat. The strange thing is that at this very time it suddenly became a bit cold in Quetta (even otherwise the weather there is pleasant) and people sleeping outside again moved inside and there they got trapped and buried.

Apart from the newspapers I get here, I have received no news either of home or of the outside world. I have had no interviews since I wrote to you last, and letters have already stopped coming here. I do not know how or where others are. I shall come to know something when Betty and Raja come for an interview day after tomorrow. They may return to Bombay soon. Ranjit and Nan have probably not yet arrived at Bhowali.

What else shall I write to you? Nothing happens in my prison life which is worth describing or which will interest anyone—the daily routine has become monotonous—reading, writing, strolling, digging here and there with a small spade—eating and sleeping. This is how the days pass. I am keeping well.

If by chance you go to Germany—which I do not wish—then do not take my book *Glimpses* with you—it has no praise for the Nazis, and because of that, it is likely you might be landed in trouble.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

I sent my last letter care of Thos. Cook, Geneva—but as a matter of precaution had sent a few lines direct to Vienna also—that too care of Thomas Cook, Vienna—it is possible that no one even asked for this letter at Vienna. If you have not received that letter, you may write to Cook at Vienna and send for it.

I am enclosing a letter for Indu.

23. To Kamala Nehru¹

Almora Jail
21 June, 1935

Dear Kamman,

Received your letter and Indu's posted at Suez—then the telegram from Berlin that the operation had been performed—and yesterday, Indu's letter from Vienna. The operation is over—it is good that you got rid of this trouble. I was not aware that it was to be performed so soon, and I had also written to you not to hurry regarding this matter. So I was somewhat surprised when the telegram came—there was some anxiety as well as some assurance. I do not know exactly what has been done—Madan's telegrams are all too brief. But after knowing that, in the opinion of Dr. Neumann of Vienna, you can leave Berlin 15 days after the operation, I felt that there was hope of your regaining strength soon. You might probably receive this letter in Berlin itself, yet I will send this to Geneva, as usual.

Probably, Professor Neumann of Vienna has asked you to go to Leysin from Berlin. That was my view too, also Kakkar's, and I had stressed this point a lot. I had recommended French Switzerland, and that meant Leysin or Montana. Leysin is at a lower height and is a new place and somehow I liked that more, thinking that it might please you more, instead of going back again to Stephani. Formerly I also

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

thought that at Leysin treatment was done for children and for bone T.B. only and no other special treatment was done. I asked Kakkar also, and he explained to me in Madan's presence that Leysin consisted of two parts, and in each part there were many sanatoria. In one part, Dr. Rollier's² treatment of bone T.B. was carried on with solar rays, etc. The sanatoria in the other part undertook routine treatment just as in Montana, etc. Because Rollier had been publicised so much in the newspapers, people often thought that he was the only doctor there. Kakkar told us all this, and only last year he had seen it all for himself. Still, Madan forgot this, and, on the basis of someone's talk on board the ship, you all decided that he was not aware of the new situation.

I remember that Kakkar praised some doctor in Leysin a lot—I do not remember his name—first his skill, and secondly his nobility and affability—said he met you just like an Indian friend and took a lot of interest in India. Still, it need not be assumed that this is some special praise—I remembered this because Leysin was mentioned often—a letter was also given to Madan for that doctor.

Where you will go from Berlin—to Leysin or elsewhere—can only be settled by you all there—especially Madan—how can I interfere from here?—I hope you will soon reach somewhere to convalesce and the business of travelling will come to an end. Progress will be faster then.

I may not receive letters from you for some time—for some days after the operation, you will neither be able to write nor will you be given the permission to do so—still, I will get all the news from Indu. She writes good letters and I get satisfaction from reading them. Indu's not going to Cairo from Suez was proper, but staying quite aloof from others on board the ship was not quite right. Whenever she gets the chance (the paper is exhausted, so am writing on the paper of a different quality) she should meet and mix with others. She has developed this trait of aloofness partly because of living away from home, specially during the last year, though not much. I do not approve of this peculiarly Indian trait though *Chacha* must be certainly liking it. Probably, she will get over this hesitation soon in Europe.

For the present, Indu will stay with you, till you get settled in a sanatorium. If she finds time during this period she may go and meet Mlle. Hemmerlin for a day. Bex is quite near to Leysin. Do not be in a hurry to send Indu away from you. Nothing will happen in ten or fifteen days and you will be troubled also, besides suffering from loneliness, by her going away. I do hope you will improve quickly now after the operation.

2. (1874–1954); a Swiss physician.

I came to know of Madan's new shirts and pyjamas from Psyche—I wish I were also fortunate enough to take so much interest in these matters. This is really a great thing.

Upadhyaya had come to Bhowali from Bombay quite early—probably with the children from Allahabad. It was the intention of Ranjit and Nan also to come up soon—at that time, there was excessive heat in Allahabad—for some days, Allahabad became the hottest place in India. Ranjit had a heat-stroke and his condition was bad for some days—the temperature was between 104° and 105°, then little by little, it came down. Because of this, Ranjit and Nan got stuck up at Allahabad—then one evening Nan's car overturned and she was thrown out—by chance, she was not hurt much. I still do not know what exactly happened, because I have not met anyone since then, and letters do not come from there at all. I read about this in the newspaper. Ranjit and Nan have now come to Bhowali and I have an interview with them day after tomorrow. I met them last two months ago here. Betty and Raja might have returned to Bombay. Betty's son was not keeping well and so she was worried and kept remembering Purandare in Bombay.

I have explained fully to Upadhyaya that he should send all the news to Amma immediately. Therefore you rest assured.

Why have you started worrying about my health—or continued to do so? The first sign of good health is that one gives no thought to it, and without paying any attention to it, goes on doing his work. My thoughts never turn towards it, and you can understand from this that I have no ailment. I have written to Indu—you will read it—that she should forget about increasing her weight—becoming fat—what to eat, what not to eat—in short, forget about her body as far as possible. It is not for the youth to be too conscious about their health. True, there are certain fundamental principles of good health, and everyone must follow them. There are some rules and those should be remembered—apart from this one should remain engaged in one's mental and physical pursuits and should not even mention illness till one is compelled to do so. I have not been constrained to do so in any way, then why should I talk about it?

It is not even a month since you left Bombay but it seems a long period. It is five weeks since we met. Formerly, I used to count the days when I would be going to Bhowali, now that situation is not there—from where should I start counting the days and till when? It is more than 300 days since my second arrest last year, when, leaving you sick, I was taken to Naini. It is almost eight months since I came to Almora. Time passes on, and some day or the other, I will certainly meet you somewhere.

Two, three days back, there was a great deal of activity here—the I.G. (who is Major Salamatullah) was to come here on his annual inspection. He came and went back, and again somehow peace and quiet have returned to the jail. He was asking me about sending me elsewhere from Almora. He did not say anything in particular but it is possible that next month or later I may be transferred somewhere. If this happens, I will ask Nan to inform you immediately by telegram so that you and Indu can send letters to the new address. Otherwise, the letters will go from place to place and reach me after a long time.

The letter I have written to Indu is for both, you and her. I had complained in it that it had not rained here so far. Just after my writing that, it rained well here. Probably there will be no shortage of water now because monsoon rains are also approaching near.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

24. To Kamala Nehru¹

Almora Jail
5-7-35

Dear Kamman,

This time, I have received no letter either from you or from Indu, for two weeks. I had no hopes of receiving a letter from you after the operation. But I thought I might get Indu's. I have received two letters from Madan through which I got all the news. He has written everything about your operation and I feel happy and assured by its success. Now you will benefit fully by A.P. and you should be able to move about soon.

Regarding Indu, first I got the news that she was going to be operated upon for appendicitis—then that it was not so. In this matter, we will have to act upon the doctors' advice. I cannot give any suggestions regarding this. My view is that Indu will benefit greatly from living in the Swiss climate and getting busy with her studies there. Medication alone does not do much good. Anyway, you and Indu and Madan take a suitable decision regarding this.

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

It is your birthday on 25th July (*Shravan Badi* 10) and by the English calendar it is on 1st August. I have sent you a small book—the book is somewhat useless—there is nothing special about it, but I had nothing else to send from here. It is a novel by Premchand—*Gaban*. Premchand is considered the best novelist in Hindi. And there is some truth also in this, but, compared to European and American writers, he very much lags behind. This very book's ending is too bad.

I have enclosed three small pictures also with this book—two of Anand Bhawan and one of Swaraj Bhawan. Some individual went to see them—he took these photos and sent them to me. Give them to Indu.

At my last interview, Ranjit and Nan came, and also Hari. All the children were more or less ill and stayed back at Bhowali. Ranjit must have gone to Khali from here—he was to stay there alone for one month. Nan returned to Bhowali.

There was one more interview—Jamnalalji came and with him Sushila (the girl who stays with him and is studying medicine) and Kailash Nath Katju. They were trekking on the hills. Jamnalalji must have now returned to Wardha.

I have never been to Badenweiler where you are at present, but I have been to places near about. These places would probably be very beautiful and nearby is Black Forest, where you and Betty have been once, with me. You get a little better and start moving about a little, then there are lots of places nearby worth seeing.

Regarding your treatment and stay there, we must act on the advice of Dr. Unverricht of Berlin. Since he has operated upon you, you have to remain under his supervision for some days and take his advice later also. So your going to Badenweiler was proper. The weather would be very pleasant there now and shall be so throughout the summer. It may not be a suitable place in winter. At that time, it would be much better to go to some mountain resort where it snows a lot.

The rains have started here—even in Allahabad it has rained a lot—many roads have been washed away or have sunk.

I am keeping good health.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

25. To Kamala Nehru¹

Almora Jail
19 July 1935

Dear Kamman,
I came to know from Madan's telegrams that you did not receive any letter from me for a long time. I was astonished to know this. I was confident that you and Indu would be getting my letters every alternate week. You know that in the matter of letter-writing, I never fail. I write at the appointed time and never postpone it for any reason, whether I receive letters from outside or not. In jail, only writing letters is in my control, not despatching them. But as far as I know, my letters are sent off from here quickly. I write on every alternate Friday, and send it to the jail office on Saturday mornings. The same day it is passed and sent to the post office. Probably my letters would have been despatched from here—there must have been some confusion in Thos. Cook's office there. It is also possible that Cook may have sent them on to Vienna or Berlin. You should enquire from there. Anyway, you read what I have written to Indu about this matter and inform Madan so that he can make enquiries. I sent last week's letter to Berlin c/o American Express. I do not know why you have not received even that letter as yet. Now, I will send letters direct to your Badenweiler address. If that address is changed, then make some arrangements for the letters. It is painful that even one letter which I may send every two weeks may not reach you. And, I do not write to anyone else here!

I have some hope that you may perhaps get the letters which have gone astray. In any case, I cannot repeat what I wrote then and probably there was also nothing very important in them. What I wrote to Madan about your treatment is briefly this, that we should act on Unverricht's advice. As he has operated upon you it is better that his advice is followed—and he is an able man. In these circumstances, it seems proper that you spend the whole of the summer in Badenweiler. Later on, we shall see. The Swiss mountains are good in winter. I have not received any significant news of you from Badenweiler. I hope you are improving there a lot because the fever has come down and you have started moving about a little. It is very good that on Nanu's recommendation you have engaged a girl to stay with you. This will do good to you and Indu both.

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

Ask Madan to send me medical reports about you from time to time so that I may know exactly what is your condition. Kakkar's complaint was that he did not write anything to him. I got sent copies of the letter Madan wrote to me regarding your operation to Kakkar and Bidhan.

I have written a lot to Indu about her studies—you will certainly read it. I am worried about her weakness as too much burden of studies may injure her health. I will get a letter written to Mlle. Hemmerlin about all this so that she can give the proper advice. Whatever suggestions she gives only that should be followed.

I had written to you that a month back Jamnalalji had come to meet me here. I was surprised to read in the newspaper later that he had given an interview in which he said that my weight had gone down by 14 lbs. This was true but there was nothing new because I had lost weight last year especially at Calcutta. Here, I have been keeping well. Incidentally, my weight increased quite a bit last month. It has increased by 4 lbs. in the last four weeks. It is possible it may increase further; probably this is due to the change of climate.

This was anyway a small matter. But the other thing that he said was strange. He said that since Kamalaji had been operated upon successfully, Jawaharlal did not intend going to Europe on release. I am perplexed how he got such an impression because neither did I say nor could I have said so. I had come to know by telegram about the operation only two or three days earlier but I did not know the details. What I said then was that I had wanted to be there at the time of the operation, but as the operation was already over that question did not arise now. How can I decide now what will happen after seven or eight months and what I shall do then? It will depend on so many things which are not completely under my control. But my intention is to come and meet you and Indu at the earliest opportunity.

I received a short letter from Dhan Gopal—he has asked for your address. I will send the address—but the question is, what is your permanent address? You are not going to stay in Baden for long. Therefore, ask Madan to decide upon a permanent address which can be given to everyone. If the address keeps changing daily, everyone cannot be kept informed.

I am sending you a small book by Rahul Sankrityayan. There is nothing of importance in the book—some portions are good, some weak—but still it is worth reading. Its importance lies in its author and in the fact that it has been written in Lhasa (Tibet). Rahulji hails from Bihar and became a Buddhist monk a few years back. He is very able and dignified. He knows Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan and many

Central Asian languages very well. He has travelled all over Europe and has spent many years in Tibet. I met him last year when I went to Bihar after the earthquake and had travelled a little with him. Thereafter, I was imprisoned. Some days later I learned somewhat longingly that he had again gone to Tibet. Later, on his return, he came to Allahabad and met Ranjit. Ranjit had suggested the name Rahul for Betty's son after him only.

I will have an interview with Ranjit and Nan after four days—They are now in Khali and after meeting me they will go to Bhowali and then all of them will return to Allahabad. Thus, these repeated visits to Bhowali will come to an end. While I was writing this letter to you today, they sent *puris*, vegetables, *halwa*, etc., from Khali which is about nine or ten miles from here.

Alongwith Indu's last letter, I received a few lines from you also, which you had written before the operation. You had referred in it to my earlier letter in which I had mentioned about my being a solitary traveller. You probably did not understand me properly, and it is also not easy to understand. It is true that I am not very happy. In fact, to be happy in this world is not easy for anyone who is even in the least sensitive, and who looks out of his narrow circle and tries to understand the present world. At the most, he develops in himself an attitude of tolerance and keeping his goal in view, works for it. Only thus can he get satisfaction or happiness, whatever you may call it, but this happiness is not an ordinary worldly happiness. The people who undertake big tasks have to carry heavy burdens. These burdens of mine have gone on increasing—I was not, nor am, bothered much about them, but certainly there has been a change in this during the last two, three years and particularly during the last six months. I have started feeling my loneliness more acutely. That loneliness is of the mind and soul. I know it is my good fortune that a large number of people love me and give me company. But still there is a wide gulf between them and me. Remember that the greatest loneliness is felt amidst a crowd—not in a forest—in a crowd which can neither know nor understand. There is communion of mind and spirit between the people when they can understand each other. Zeal and courage are good things no doubt, but if right thinking is not there, they cannot take you far. Hindus and Muslims who break each other's heads and kill and murder in the name of religion—do they lack in zeal or courage? No knot can be untied by mere zeal and no intricate problem can be solved for the present-day world is full of such knotty problems.

What do we aim at after all? We talk vaguely about freedom and so no two persons can derive the same meaning. Freedom for what and

for what purpose? Freedom is not the end. It is the means for achieving another end—what is that?

I plunged deeply into politics and obviously became a politician. Yet, my attention was always drawn towards other problems which are the real problems of this world like the human relationships, national relations, the relationship between man and man, and between man and woman, or the attitude of adults towards children. Taking together all these relationships, what should be the relationship among the people within a nation? How can there be maximum mutual cooperation, and ultimately, what should be the relationship between nations? These questions are bigger than mere politics. Intelligent people of the world think about these questions, discuss them and try to resolve them. But of what concern are these questions to our country? We are all spiritually enlightened people and want to have direct personal contact with God. Why should we have any concern with men? People here have nothing to do with learning, nor with thinking or understanding. Whatever pictures have been formed in the minds during their childhood stick there till the end. There is not even a desire to understand. They are confident that they know everything and consider those who do not agree with them as obstinate or selfish.

I consider all these things most stupid. Maybe it is my mistake because from the beginning I received a different type of education. Ten or twelve years that I spent in the school or college were not of much importance. I got real education later by myself and therefore whatever I am is a result of my own efforts. Man is a mass of ideas. Some people do not outgrow the ideas, formed during their childhood, whatever their age. For more than twenty years, how many battles I have fought and still continue to fight in my mind. The real battlefield is in every person's body and mind and decisions are made there only. Only their shadow falls outside. After these long years of inner turmoil, struggle and deep reflection, I gradually reached certain conclusions. But as I went on untying the knots of my mind, I felt that I was getting further and further away from others. Many of their ideas began to appear to me as absolutely wrong and harmful. The gulf between them and me went on widening. What they considered intelligent I thought it to be stupid. And so two ideas took their roots in my mind: first, what is called the religious way is absolutely dangerous for it increases selfishness and suppresses the real matters of spirit. And secondly, there is only one remedy both for the individual and the country, and that is the right education. It is fundamental education which teaches one to think, understand and discriminate. Without this there can be no real progress.

After looking all around me and then at myself, I felt my loneliness more. The real journey is not of the body but of the mind and thoughts. One who is not mentally and spiritually one's companion is a stranger. There are lots of fellow-travellers even in trains, but they are strangers. But sometimes you come across a stranger who immediately finds a place in your heart and mind. Sometimes I receive letters from strangers which contain some lines that straightaway appeal to my heart. But I rather receive these rarely. Very often nobody understands this or even tries to understand it. And when one does not understand another person there is a lack of trust and one fears him and attempts are made to keep oneself away from him or to hide things from him. Where there is no trust, it is difficult for love to sustain.

When I have been observing such things around me then how can they increase my happiness or remove my loneliness? It becomes even difficult for me to act upon the principles I have set for my life. During Papa's lifetime my burden was light and I had no worries about domestic matters. I relied on him for everything. Despite the fact that there was a wide difference in our views, we understood each other a lot and there was no need for us to talk much in order to know what either of us desired. His death removed this great support of mine and one person who understood me somewhat by his love and intellect was no more. Then I felt my loneliness more and also the burden of the household. The burden was not much but some anxiety was there. This anxiety went on increasing because some difficulties came in the way of my following those principles which I wanted to follow.

All these things went on affecting me. After seeing the attitude of my colleagues, I started feeling day by day that I will have to travel alone on my journey. This fact has been emerging more clearly before me for the last six months. It is apparent that this does not mean that I have no companions, no friends to love me or help me when I am tired and exhausted. But there are very few who share with me my thoughts and principles of life.

You have written that in Vienna some women who were members of some organisation whose task it was to advise women came to meet you. I do not know which organisation this is—there are hundreds of such organisations in Europe. You will not be able to attend any conference till September. You should not act in haste in such matters. You should not undertake any such work throughout this year. Remember one more thing. In such matters you have to proceed very cautiously and after a lot of thinking. You are not conversant with the strange conditions that prevail in Europe and taking a wrong step can do

more harm than good. In my opinion you should not participate in any conference or general meeting without Nanu's or Mlle. Rolland's² advice. It is not so essential to attend conferences—nothing is taught or learnt there. It is more important that you try to understand those problems which are troubling Europe and the entire world. And remember that nothing significant can be understood quickly or without effort. One has to search a lot and undertake much trouble in order to know those things which are really worth knowing. And the more a man goes ahead, the longer the road appears to be. The process of learning and understanding can continue throughout one's life, and should continue. The essential thing is to develop in oneself a thirst for learning and understanding which may always prod us on. One who has this thirst learns everywhere and in all conditions. One who does not have this can learn only with difficulty. The desire to do something remarkable often comes in the way of learning and understanding. Only learning before doing can enable one to walk along the right path.

This letter has become quite long and you will get tired of reading it.
Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Madeleine Rolland, the sister of Romain Rolland.

26. To Kamala Nehru¹

District Jail
Almora
Aug. 2, 1935

Letter No. 6

Dear Kamman,

I have indicated above the number of this letter. This is the sixth letter since you left. I will give such numbers on every letter. Thus you will know easily if any letter is missing in between. So far you have received my first and fourth letters—possibly the fifth one also you must

1. Kamala Nehru Papers, N.M.M.L. Original in Hindi.

have got by now. The second and the third have gone astray. They may reach you later after wandering about in Vienna or Berlin.

I sent you a brief telegram day before yesterday for your birthday which was yesterday. Hope you received it.

I came to know a little about your condition from Indu's letter. She had not written very clearly and so I did not understand it properly. Madan has not written for some days. Possibly the A.P. treatment is being continued and will continue—occasionally, the fluid, etc., will increase or decrease. You must be getting tired of all these at times—you must be getting impatient too. This is bound to happen and there is nothing strange about it. But there is nothing to worry about it—a lasting cure takes time and by hurrying it takes more time rather than less. Therefore, you need not worry about this. Start walking about a little this summer and then your strength will increase greatly during the winter when it snows. You should be all right by the time I come! But that is still a long way off.

August has come again—I am reminded of the last August when all of a sudden, I was sent from Dehra Dun to Allahabad and released there for a few days. I had mentioned a hundred days at that time—how many hundreds are past now! At present, there is no mention at all about my transfer, and what mention could there be? When I have to be sent away, I will be sent without prior intimation. By chance, in the same month of August, I have been transferred for the second time in two years from one jail to another—from Dehra to Naini. These days it is raining heavily here. It has been raining continuously for four days—I feel somewhat tired of it—well, it will clear up in a day or two.

I read in the newspaper today that Didda, Nan and Ranjit reached Allahabad three or four days back. Now, there is no one nearby to meet me. But I have heard that Bul is coming to Kumaon to visit this side. I do not know what she will do by visiting these places in this weather, though the weather is not bad and personally I like moving about in the rains. If she comes this side, I may have an interview with her.

I wrote to you last week that I was sending you a small book by Rahul Sankrityayan. There was some delay in sending it as I received another book by Premchand—*Karmabhoomi*—and I thought I would send that too to you, after reading it. The parcel has been sent now. There is a small book of maps also in it for Indu. Premchand's book, as usual, is good and bad both. Some portions are so unreal and worthless that they make one laugh. Still, he is considered one of the best writers in Hindi, and you will be interested in reading it.

Earlier, I had made arrangements for one or two newspapers to be sent to you. I wonder whether they reach you or not. I had also written to you that, if you wanted, you could get *The Bombay Chronicle* also by writing to Upadhyaya. Probably, you did not receive that letter of mine. I came to know from Indu's letter that you people do not get proper newspapers to read there. You are already deprived of the news of India and get very little news of other places too. Another problem is that very few foreign newspapers are allowed to enter Germany these days. Anyway, I have now instructed Upadhyaya to make arrangements for many Indian and British newspapers. They will all come directly to you at Badenweiler. I have written their names in my letter to Indu. You write or get it written to me which papers you receive. I have doubts regarding one or two, whether they will be allowed there or not. All these newspapers, etc., will go by ordinary mail, not by air mail. Therefore, you will start getting them some days after you receive this letter.

Remember one thing—I have written to Indu and am writing to you also—that you should inform the newspaper agents whenever your address changes. For Indian newspapers, you should write to Upadhyaya, and for others, directly to England. You will have to be very careful regarding the address. Remember that I will now be writing only to Badenweiler till I get a new address.

You will now get many weeklies and monthlies, etc. As such, it is no use sending for a daily newspaper like *The Bombay Chronicle* from here. It would also be difficult to read a whole sheaf of papers.

If by chance Indu leaves you and goes away somewhere—as she intends to—then who will give me news of you? If you can write, well and good, otherwise tell Madan that he should write. Whatever letters Indu writes to me, she should send them on to you.

In the few lines you wrote to me from Berlin, you had expressed the hope that you might visit Geneva, etc., by September, and that you might probably attend some conference. It is obvious that this is not possible, and you should give up all thoughts of hurrying things like this. Of course, the sickness is the reason, and therefore the first thing is that you have to get all right. Besides this, one more thing has to be kept in mind. The desire to do something is good, but not the tendency to learn something hurriedly and start doing it. One always thinks of doing something but not of understanding it. Thus one cannot concentrate on it. Full attention should be paid to understand a thing, and then one will certainly act at the proper time. And for understanding and learning a thing, it is not necessary to go or wander anywhere. If a person makes his mind receptive, he can learn anywhere.

A child's mind is most receptive and so he learns most quickly. As he grows, the flexibility and receptiveness of his mind decrease, and so it becomes more difficult for him to learn. That is why it is said that every individual's personality is made in his childhood. It becomes difficult to change him later. Some people—they are few—remain somewhat like students throughout their lives and keep their minds open. I think this capability is present in me to some extent.

Therefore, the important thing is that instead of making vague attempts to learn something, one should keep one's mind fully receptive and keep its windows open. If this is there then there is no need of other efforts. The eyes see by themselves, the ears hear and the mind absorbs. It is obvious that in your present state of health, no doctor will give you permission to study, nor is it necessary. You just keep an open mind and with ease try to understand Europe, whatever aspect of it comes before you. It is a very complex thing, but still we can imbibe certain things of it easily. Talk to the girl—Mrs. Geissler—who stays with you—gradually develop the subjects of the talk—take interest in diverse subjects—and put questions to her. If you get the chance to meet other people, then talk similarly to them also. You can understand Europe far better in this manner than by merely reading books or attending conferences occasionally. No knowledge comes by itself—everything has to be learnt—even sweeping. Man learns very little at school and college. Only the mind is somewhat trained and disciplined there. We can learn only from our own lives and from the hundreds of people whom we meet, provided we make friends with the life and meet it with open arms and mind. If we close our mind tightly beforehand and do not let the light outside enter it, then how will its darkness be removed?

Therefore, do not worry at all that you are unable to get up and run about and learn some special things. Many people think that a man learns specially during sickness because, first, he has time and is at ease, and secondly, the mind is more receptive at this time.

I have written lots of other things, good and bad, in my letter to Indu. They are meant for you also—what is the use of repeating them.

I am enclosing letters for Indu and Madan.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

27. V. K. Krishna Menon¹

Badenweiler

15.11.35

My dear Menon,

On my arrival here I discovered that my wife had had a setback and was again running a high temperature. Almost for the whole period of my absence she had kept remarkably well. But this was evidently too good to last and two days before our return her condition deteriorated. Nothing very serious has happened so far and perhaps we must expect these ups and downs. Nevertheless this kind of thing is depressing both for her and for us. And it delays the transfer to Switzerland. Today there was an aspiration and irrigation and very probably her temperature will fall tomorrow and she will keep tolerably well for a week or so. I suppose there is nothing to be done except to carry on in the way and wait.

My visit to England tired and exhausted me for the time being but I have recovered after two nights' rest. At the same time I found it rather stimulating also. It was my first experience of activity of a sort after two years of seclusion and I always find this exhilarating. I met many people who interested me—and, alas, many more who did not. I am not in the habit of hurling complimentary epithets at people, but you will understand me when I tell you that it was a delight for me to come in personal touch with you. I would have been very much at sea without you to turn to in London and I am very grateful to you for all the trouble you took over me in spite of your ill health. Do get well soon.

Your wonderful grapes have been greatly appreciated here and my wife took to them immediately. She wants me to thank you for them.

I found a great pile of letters awaiting me here and I am vainly trying to deal with them. It is a trial to carry on without any secretarial or other assistance. It is not even possible to get a typist in Badenweiler. Indeed this place is gradually curling itself up to go to sleep for the winter. The few shops are being boarded up and the streets are deserted. Cheerful prospect in store for us!

Letters from India tell a woeful tale and ask me when I shall return, as if I would make much difference. But the call from India grows

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

and I feel it in my bones and some day or other it will be too strong to resist.

Again I must repeat—get well soon.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The election results must have come out nearly 24 hours ago, but here in this sleepy corner of the world we do not know them yet. Of the articles I left with you I understand that two—"The Solidarity of Islam" and "The Aga Khan"—have appeared in the November number of *The Modern Review*.²

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 468-474.

28. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Badenweiler
23-12-1935

Bebec my dear,

It is long since I have written to you. Your letter came about three weeks ago and it hovered in my mind day-after-day and yet I did not write. Why I do not quite know, except that I wanted to sit down with it with some peace of mind and that peace of mind was absent. I went to Paris also for a while and then busied myself into a revision of my new book—a heavy task which I did not like. All my days were spent with Kamala and then till very late at night I sat with my manuscript and read what I had written in the long solitudes of prison.

But this morning, very early, as the dawn was creeping over the snow-covered hill-sides and I was trudging along heavily in the snow, I thought of you again and the desire to write to you became strong. Now I sit in a room adjoining Kamala's while she sleeps or lies in a semi-conscious condition. Outside it is snowing again and a haze covers the landscape; it is very beautiful and peaceful, but the peace is more of death than of life, and only a few birds, hopping about in the snow, bring life and activity to the scene.

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

You may know perhaps the fate of Kamala before this reaches you, or she may still hover on the edge of life. But it seems hardly conceivable that she will return from the brink of the precipice. She has gone too far. Her face is beautiful still and her eyes look sorrowfully and beckon, but her body is terribly thin and emaciated. But the face also, with all its child-like innocence and beauty, has lost the vital look which it so bravely carried throughout these long struggles. Perhaps it is as well that the struggle is ending, one wearies of an unceasing conflict with nature and its innumerable weapons, a conflict without peace or harbourage. Nature is still all-powerful.

I am sorry to learn that circumstances have led you away from Hyderabad and that the 'Golden Threshold' is no longer your home. Home has begun to have a curious sound for me. Where is a home for any of us, for you, for me? We may find a shelter and even affection with people who care for us, if we are fortunate. But we wander still, in spirit and mind, if not in body, nomads with no fixed abode, exiles everywhere. But one lesson you have helped to teach me, all unconsciously, and that is how to smile when the heart is heavy and the body bent. Your radiant smile has never left you, whatever happened, and I feel sure that it never will. In the dry deserts of life it is something to have these oases.

Indu is here. She came only a short while ago from her Swiss School for her Christmas vacation. For a year or a little less she will remain in Switzerland. After that I am not sure. She may later on go to Oxford, she may go to Paris, or she may try to fit in both, one after the other.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

29. To Padmaja Naidu¹

Lausanne
16.2.1936

Bebec dear,

Your very enthusiastic letter. Why this overflowing enthusiasm? I am afraid I did not grow at all excited when I heard that I had been

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

elected President.² The news came to me first by telephone from Reuter's office and I don't think I was affected by it to any marked extent. I was busy and occupied with an interesting conversation which filled my mind much more. But then I am a very prosaic individual and you are a poet.

Anyway, what do you expect me to do as President? What wonders are likely to happen? Do not expect much if you would not be disappointed. Miracles do not happen, except sometimes in our heart, and the world of politics does not encourage wholesomeness or idealism.

Kamala has been doing well since she came here. I hardly dare be sanguine after so many relapses and setbacks, and yet it does seem that she is definitely a little better.

I shall soon be in India and more and more Europe seems to fade away in my mind. And yet the two are inextricably mixed up and I cannot think of one apart from the other.

I sail by the K.L.M. plane from Marseilles on February 29th, leap year's day, another symbol or portent for you! On the 4th March morning at 8 a.m. I am due to reach Allahabad if the Mediterranean or the deserts of Western Asia do not swallow me. I do not know what I shall do after that or how long I shall stay at home. Probably I shall remain there for five days or so and then go to Bapu. I am, or shall be, largely in the hands of Rajendra Babu and Bapu during these early days. Come and meet me if you can. It will be a great joy to see you again.

Love,

Yours,
Jawahar

2. Reference is to Jawaharlal's election as President of the Indian National Congress. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 87.

GLOSSARY

Adrak	ginger
Baz bhatta	a Kashmiri preparation of fried rice and vegetables
Dangal	a wrestling-match
Halwa	a sweetmeat made of flour, sugar and ghee
Puri	unleavened fried bread
Sanchalak	secretary
Tanashah	a dictator

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